

The Hillandale News



The official journal of
The City of London
Phonograph and
Gramophone Society
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MINIATURE PHONOGRAPH
ONE OF A SERIES —
SEE 'PEOPLE PAPER'
& THINGS PAGE 222

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Special
Collections

SOCIETY RUL

1. That the Society shall be called THE CITY OF LONDON and that its objects shall be the social intercourse of its members and study of sound reproducing apparatus, as well as its application.
2. That the Officers of the Society shall consist of a President, Secretary, Financial Treasurer and Meetings Secretary, with a Meeting in October, and who shall be ex-officio members.
3. That the management of the Society be vested in a Committee Meeting, and with power to co-opt, and that its duties shall be objects. Written notice must be given to the Secretary one month of any resolution proposing to amend these rules.
4. New members (ladies or gentlemen) may be elected on the meeting of the Society on the payment of an annual subscription, which is renewable twelve calendar months thereafter.
5. The financial Treasurer shall, once in every year, submit a Auditor elected by the Society and shall furnish a Balance Sheet for the inspection of members at each Annual General Meeting.

President: George Frow, [REDACTED]
Vice-Presidents: James F. Dennis, R.C.S., [REDACTED]

A.D. Besford, [REDACTED]

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Committee: B. Raynaud, F. Andrews, J. McKeown.

TREASURER'S NOTES: In future, would members please send etc.) direct to the Treasurer, *together with all orders for goods*, as this will simplify our accounting system, and avoid double handling.

MEMBERSHIP RATES:

U.K.	£3.00 per year	U.S.A. & Canada	£6.00 Surface Mail
New Zealand Airmail	£4.00 per year		£8.00 Airmail
Australia, Japan, etc. (now payable directly to the Treasurer, as bulk subscription has ceased)	£4.00 per year		

Overseas members are requested to send STERLING DRAFTS or banknotes, as check clearances here carry a high commission rate. The Society no longer operates within the Post Office Giro system. New Zealand and Australian Postal Orders are acceptable in the U.K. To save postage in mailing receipts, these are sent out with the goods or next magazine to members. PLEASE MAKE OUT ALL CHECKS AND DRAFTS PAYABLE TO "THE CITY OF LONDON PHONOGRAPH AND GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY".

MEETINGS are held at the "John Snow" Public House, Broadwick Street, Soho, London, W.1, on the first MONDAY of every month commencing at 7.00 p.m. In addition, regular meetings are held at the following centres:

HEREFORD. Details from the Secretary, D.G. Watson, [REDACTED] Tupsley, Hereford.

MIDLANDS. Details from the Secretary, P. Bennett, [REDACTED] Goldthorn Park, Wolverhampton, Staffs, WV4 5DE. Phone: [REDACTED]

MANCHESTER. Details from the Secretary, Clive Thompson, [REDACTED] Mosley Common, Worsley, Lancs.

VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA. Details from C. Gracie, [REDACTED] Cavendish, Victoria 3408, Australia.

MEMBERS PLEASE NOTE that all money should now be sent to our Treasurer, B.A. Williamson, [REDACTED] Liverpool, L16 1LA.



LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SANTA BARBARA

I WILL APOLOGISE BEFOREHAND SHOULD THIS PUBLICATION ARRIVE LATER THAN EXPECTED - I HAVE BEEN AWAY ON HOLIDAY DURING THE FIRST HALF OF SEPTEMBER - AND THERE WERE NOT ENOUGH ARTICLES SUBMITTED BEFORE I WENT TO COMPLETE THIS ISSUE.

EDITOR.

Chairman's Chat

Well, it has been and gone, our Centenary Exhibition, and I will not say much about it here, because I know that the President has sent the Editor a report of the event. It was hard work, but very enjoyable for all that, and it was good to meet so many members from outside the normal London meetings circle. It was also very encouraging to see how some local members were prepared to give up much of their spare time for the cause, and I would like to record my own personal thanks to all those who helped arrange, and man the Exhibition. In particular, I should mention the President himself, who spent most of the Exhibition fortnight at 29 Exhibition Road, and Mrs. Frow who gave up many days to sell reprints and spares in the foyer. Incidentally, Guides to the Exhibition are still available; these contain forty-one pages with sixty illustrations, giving a history of talking machines and detailed descriptions of over 120 machines.

Now for our next trick; the AGM will take place on Saturday October 8th at the Eccentric Club, 9 Ryder St., S.W.1., and as last year, will be accompanied by some entertainment programmes. (A notice was sent out with the August 'Hillandale'.) Remember, the AGM is your chance to air your views on the Society, to make suggestions (constructive ones please!) and to propose programmes for next year's meetings. So Let's be Having You!

The Society Centenary Exhibition

by George Frow

Held at the British Institute of Recorded Sound,
Kensington, from August 14th to 28th, 1977

A couple of years ago when the idea of a Centenary Exhibition was first floated, it seemed such a long time in the future that it is hard to realise that it is now all over, and that we can now take a backward look at it.

Our Chairman's intention was that it should not only show the history of the phonograph and the gramophone, but that accent should be laid on having a display of fairly easily obtained machines to guide any new converts to our hobby, and that this should take the form of table and portable gramophones, rather perhaps than phonographs, which are commanding silly prices. Thus it was that there was a room filled with fine phonographs, horn

and cabinet gramophones, a second smaller room with portables such as grandmother might still have under the sideboard at home, and a lobby display of various machines that didn't quite fit either category.

A place for the Exhibition was appropriately fixed in Exhibition Road - really named as the approach road to the Great Exhibition held in the Crystal Palace in Hyde Park in 1851 - near the centre of the museum area and a couple of hundred yards up from the Science Museum. Our host was the British Institute of Recorded Sound, and appropriately its Director, Patrick Saul, pointed out that the building itself was celebrating its own centenary.

Much work was done behind the scenes in the Society in preparation, machines selected from members' collections, the rooms measured, various members assigned tasks and our Chairman, Christopher Proudfoot sat down and wrote up the official catalogue and arranged the illustrations. This catalogue is a splendid work, and stands on its own as a text-book of the phonograph and gramophone; we hope he will take up his pen again in pursuit of the rest of the British gramophone field. A remarkable fact was that even while the Exhibition was in progress several visitors arrived carrying this official catalogue which they had bought outside at a London market at twice the price they were available at the Exhibition door - £2 instead of £1 - showing that

perhaps some winter football ticket tout was extending his season.

In the week before the opening date of Saturday, August 13th Dave Roberts moved in and carried out a wonderful job assembling show cases and having lighting fitted. A number of young girls appeared with green baize, scissors and staple guns and fitted out the cases, and George Woolford made up and hand painted display cards for each of the 126 machines on show. At this point these machines had started to arrive, and apart from the odd horn were all in place by 10 pm on the Friday evening and we were ready to open on the Saturday morning.

Some weeks earlier, the publicity department set up by Goodwin Ive, with family help, circulated the newspaper and magazine world, radio and television companies and the tourist boards, and posters were delivered to tourist offices, hotels, etc. Also a Press Reception was arranged for the first Monday, and the members of the Society were hosts to various broadcasters, journalists and businessmen, some of whom turned out to be Society members anyhow! We hoped they would go away and spread the gospel and put out the message on the air; our Chairman and several machines were heard at some of the peak listening times.

In the main hall of the Institute building stood the Society table, which became a meeting point for members, lapsed members and prospective members, and we were glad to come face to face with many friends of years who had been telephone voices or signatures on far-away letters up to then. The Society catalogues and spares were on display, and it surprised us greatly that so many members just did not realise what a great range of reprints and spares the Society carries.

This table, together with the exhibition rooms, was manned on a rota basis from 10 am to 6 pm every open day, and a minimum of three or four members was needed to guide visitors and answer questions, and to demonstrate the machines. As happens on these occasions, we had the occasional visitor of exceptional interest, a lady whose father, Will Pettit, made banjo records for Odeon, a very elderly gentleman Mr. Offenbacher who used to work for Parlophone at Hertford - and that was years and years ago - and the daughter of the late J.A. Mitchell, one-time Columbia's designer and engineer and holder of over a hundred patents of gramophone and other interests.

The Exhibition itself was composed of 126 machine items, starting at an early tin-foil phonograph of about 1880, and going through to a radiogram of 1931 and a 78/33 1/3 Decalian player of about 1951, and in between a chronological display of machines of United States, British, French and German origin was arranged in the large room and nearly all under glass. Also there were table and floor-standing models, and these and an Idelia

phonograph were used to show off the styles of recording at their best. In its way, each of these machines represented a milestone of recording history, an improved motor, an improved reproducer or horn, a more compact style of cabinet. Naturally every effort was made to play the best recordings on the most impressive machines and many visitors expressed surprise at what the old-timers could produce in the way of quality.

A lobby outside the main room was given over to various Grafololas (Columbia disc machines), Pathé disc machines and cameraphones, punt and pocket portables and oddities, and in this hall also were listening points where visitors could hear either of two hour-long tapes compiled from historic recordings by Bob Walters of the B.I.R.S.. There were also two windowless - and rather airless - listening rooms just large enough for one or two visitors to slip in, and to which those of us on duty began to refer to as "the cupboard", and we wondered if any overlooked visitors spent the night in them!

The small back room housed the display of portables, a pair of Ginn gramophones, needle-boxes and sound boxes, and tended to have a claustrophobic effect on whoever was there on duty, but Ralph Caton took it over and regaled visitors to a wide range of 78s, a sort of portable gramophone comparative tone-test, in fact.

When the second Saturday evening came it was time to pack it all up and take it away, and most of this was wonderfully achieved in about a couple of hours by Dave Roberts and a team of members, the glass cases being dismantled and stacked near the front door for loading after the weekend.

All this would not have been achieved without the help of Mr. Saul and his staff, the ladies who ran the Society table with charm and efficiency, Dave Roberts who set us up and dismantled us with professional authority, Goodwin Ive and his daughter Frances who put together the publicity and got the Society's name before the public, Paul Temple and Ralph Caton our reliable stewards on all and every day, and all the officers and delegated members who really gave of their best.

It is too early yet to comment on the degree of success of the whole undertaking; that the Exhibition was well mounted there is no doubt, both the Society and the B.I.R.S. pulled out the stops, whether we got a good return of visitors for the effort is somewhat in doubt, whether the venue was the right one, whether the 45p. charge at the door turned away some of the public - all this is too much to make a balanced comment on with an editorial deadline to meet. We have undoubtedly made new members whom we must retain if possible, we have established new contacts as a result, and I extend the Society's and my sincere thanks to all concerned in it for whatever part they played.

Special Report on Advertising for the Centenary Exhibition

Terms of Reference: Maximum advertising, minimum expense. by Goodwin Ive

Advertising comprised editorial, posters and a press day. No space was bought.

We began mailing press releases at the end of May and continued up to a few days before the Exhibition opened. Approximately seventy went out, with special letters to the B.B.C., A.T.V., Capital Radio and L.B.C.

Posters were delivered by hand to many London hotels, tourist agencies and museums. A Press Day was held on Monday 15th August; this was well attended, a professional touch being given through the generosity of Messrs. Christie's, who provided an excellent lunch with drinks, and this fine gesture helped considerably to meet our aim "advertising at minimum expense".

We have no record of the editorial space gained in the trade journals, but coverage appears to have been fairly widespread. Reaction from the daily press was disappointing, and only the influence of a Member produced a feature article in the 'Daily Mail'. 'The Times' diary compared us more than favourably with an unforeseen competitor "100 Years of Recorded

Sound", an exhibition currently running at Harrods. These two national dailies are the only ones known to have mentioned us. The radio circuit was more helpful. A B.B.C. recording team came along and a twelve-minute interview with our Chairman walking round the exhibits went out twice on B.B.C. Radio 4 and was borrowed by B.B.C. Plymouth. We have no record of anyone making the journey to London from there unless Joe Pengelly's visit was due to the broadcast!

Capital Radio was very kind to us, for hour after hour exhorting the listeners to go along to see a fine exhibition. L.B.C. also gave us 'air' and we managed a day on Teletourist, the "what's on" telephone service. We also crept into the journals "What's On?" and "Time Out".

We thought the coverage to be most satisfactory, but the public response was rather disappointing. Maybe we fell into the trap of thinking the general public in volume would share the enthusiasm of the dedicated collector.

Errata

Foolish mistake

I have made a 'faux pas' in my article printed in the AUGUST 1977 issue of "Hillendale News" No. 97, where on Page 186, in listing the holdings of the British Library, I state, in brackets, in the second paragraph, that it was a set of Metropole Records which had authors reading from their own works. This was a foolish mistake on my part, for which I have no excuse at all! I should have put 'Dominion Records', the catalogue numbers of

G.F. Andrews

which were B1 to B12 available in one album at 1 guinea, or available separately at 1s 9d each. They were issued in October 1929 and the authors were, in record order: Ian Hay, W.W. Jacobs, Sheila Kay-Smith, Rose Macauley, Compton McKenzie, A.E.W. Mason, A.A. Milne, Alfred Noyes, St. de Vere Staepole, E. Temple Thurston, Hugh Walpole and Rebecca West.

Frank Andrews

People Paper & Things

by George Frow

Our own Exhibition has only been one of many this year, but none the worse for that. As I write the Midlands Branch is about to stage one this week at Birmingham Science Museum, and from July to this October there has been the magnificent display in Edinburgh, which will take some surpassing. In December the London Science Museum is mounting one which we hope will give us a first official glance at the E.M.I. collection. Even while the Society's was on in Kensington half a mile down the road in Knightsbridge The Universal Provider - Harrods Store - was also displaying one called 'A Hundred Years of Recorded Sound', but this was mounted from Germany and unfortunately fell well short of the mark by today's expected standards; it was, however, to boost record sales and probably did what was intended.

From Holland I have received notice that an exhibition of early material will be held from Sept. 29th to 2nd October at the Antiekmarkt "De Looier", Looiersgracht 38, Amsterdam. This notice I see is signed 'Nipper'. How that terrier still gets around! Also a newspaper article from New Zealand from Roger Cole, which he tells me brought him in gratis 2 Standards, an Amberola and over 200 cylinders. I had long thought the days of that sort of public response were over; it is so usual these days to have letters from machine owners asking for an estimate of value, and more often than not lacking a return stamp.

Turning to other things, in the August issue of this magazine were shown some of a set of early radio scenes in Japan, kindly sent to me by Toru Funahashi of Osaka, and we would like to apologise for not including his name with them. They tell me this sort of thing happens in Fleet Street as well.

Most British record collectors will know

that 12 inch Columbia disc 9909 which turns up regularly. This is "Nymphs and Shepherds" and the Dance Duet from "Hansel and Gretel" and was recorded in 1929 by the Halle Orchestra under Sir Hamilton Harty, and sung by a choir of 250 Manchester schoolchildren. It was an attractive record and immensely popular, and is probably still available on microgroove somewhere. I was most interested to hear in a radio item that the schoolchildren performers, now all in their sixties, have a '1929 Nymphs and Shepherds Club', and that it is quite a flourishing concern. Does anyone know another similar?

We have reached the situation in our hobby where full-sized replicas of vintage machines are being produced; consider for instance the Japanese version of the 'trade mark' gramophone, or the tin-foil phonograph being produced by Goodwin Ive. Fine-scale miniatures are now being offered and some examples are illustrated. These are supplied in a fitted box from Sr. D. Manuel Olive,

Barcelona-6, Spain, and cost around £400 a set. Sr. Olive will probably shortly be supplying an illustrated catalogue of his full range, but perhaps the price will deter those who would otherwise be keen to assemble a collection of miniatures. After all one can get the real thing for far less; at the same time it cannot be denied that judging from the original coloured photographs, these miniatures are 'fantastic'. I have no hesitation in offering this Hollywood word.

I am obliged to M. Gomez Montejano, a Spanish member, for that paragraph and also for much information on the Centenary commemoration there, in fact he sent us some fine posters which were on show at our London Exhibition, and these were the result of a national competition there; Spain is not a country that features at all really in the history of the talking machine - the United States, Great Britain, Germany and France had the pioneers whose names are in the history books - but Spain has certainly pulled the stops out on the Centenary. Firstly there was a commemoration concert in the Spring attended by the Queen of Spain, in which the Radio Television Orchestra played Spanish



music - and even if Chabrier was a Frenchman, French composers wrote much music about Spain. Another composer featured was Sarasate, whose violin recordings are sometimes found on G & T. The souvenir programme of this concert is quite impressive. The Spanish Phonograph Industry also produced a film entitled "El Sonido en el Tiempo", or "The Sound in Time", and this will be distributed in Spain this Autumn and Winter.

Another Spanish member, Francisco Arellano will be mounting a display of his collection in Barcelona in October in the Colegio di Arquitectos featuring 67 phonographs and 29 gramophones, as well as related items, Stroh type violin, early radios and telephones. Additionally - and this is where so many exhibitions fall down - Sr. Arellano is putting on displays of interesting records, posters, catalogues, books, various accessories and allied matter, the last in the list I note being a phonograph mirror. Anyone visiting the Costa Brava for an Autumn holiday should look out for this display and we extend our thanks to our Spanish friends for sending this wonderful material, which will go into the Society archive.

Michael Walters (c/o British Museum - Natural History, Tring, Herts, HP23 6AP) again invites G & S enthusiasts to send him a large s.a.e. for the latest of his privately circulated summary of Gilbert and Sullivan productions, both amateur and professional. This private venture, which runs to a handful of foolscap sheets with most issues, also includes reviews and criticisms of light opera productions outside G & S.

A splendid history of the phonograph and gramophone has been sent to me by its author and after seeing others in recent months, this version can be recommended without reservation; except of course that a knowledge of written French is advisable. It is called "Le Phonographe a la Belle Epoque", and is by our member Paul Charbon of Strasbourg. The book naturally sees things from the French side, and tends to stress the phonograph rather than the gramophone, but many

of the illustrations are from European mainland sources and are new to this reader. In addition the author has given all his sources and origins and is to be much commended for doing so. How to get it? It costs 40.80 French francs, including carriage, and is obtainable from "Les Amis de l'Histoire des PTT d' Alsace", BP 153 R4, 67004 Strasbourg, France.

Lastly and most importantly this year of the Centenary has given many of us an opportunity to see again old friends and make the acquaintance of new. Some of us had the chance at the Edinburgh Symposium of meeting the Director of the Edison Site at West Orange, Lynn Wightman and his charming wife, and at that time we were glad to welcome Mrs. Leah Burt, Assistant Archivist at the Site, and her husband Wally to our house and share the adventures of pressing on to Edinburgh with them. Leah Burt never seems too busy to answer the enquirer after information at the Site and some of us have much to thank her for. Al Sefl, an officer of the American Phonograph Society was over at the time of the London Exhibition, visited it twice and he and his delightful wife Ellen spent several days with us. Al and I have co-operated on a book on the Edison Phonographs which should be in print about the time that this magazine appears, and it was a great experience to meet after several years of voluminous correspondence between our two addresses.

Allen Debus, over in London on research, was another American visitor to the Exhibition, and our meeting was as usual all too brief. He did tell me however that he believes he may have discovered the earliest production spring-driven phonograph found so far, an Amet Talking Machine motored Gramophone. This motor is marked as patented in 1892 and numbered 1011, and was made for the Chicago Talking Machine Company. This would pre-date the Greenhill Motor by a year. Allen told me the reproducer is missing and asks if anyone has a spare Bell and Tainter! At least someone may lend him one to have copied, and as they used to say, if you don't ask you don't get.

Report of the London Meeting

30th July, 1977

Our London meeting was once again held in the pleasant atmosphere of the Eccentric Club. The presenter was Gordon Bromly and the program consisted of operatic arias (in which Gordon specialises) on records from almost the beginning of the gramophone up to the latest quadraphonic recording. Emphasis was on the development of recording during the past 100 years, this year being as every enthusiast must know, the centenary of Edison's invention of recording sound.

There are unfortunately no recordings from the first eleven years, as they were nearly all done on tin-foil which was Edison's original invention. However, in 1888 Col. Gouraud came to England and was soon busy making records. We are fortunate today in being able to hear many otherwise unavailable old recordings via the modern L.P. disc. Gordon began his recital by playing excerpts from Kevin Daly's production "The Wonder of the Age" (a two-disc L.P. set) in which we heard the voices of Florence Nightingale, W.E. Gladstone and Sir Arthur Sullivan, all talking not singing.

One of the problems with early recording was the somewhat insensitive recording soundboxes, and certain voices recorded far better than others. In this connection, the next recording played was of the American 'boy tenor' (sic) George J. Gaskin singing "Sweet Marie", recorded 31st October 1895, Record No.158. This was followed by Ferruccio Giannini tenor (father of Dusolina Giannini) singing "Solo profugo" from *Marta*, recorded 6th May 1896, Record No.931. Another operatic aria, "Il Balen" from *Travatore* sung by A. del Campo and recorded 12th August 1897, Record No.1109 finished this trio of American-recorded Berliners, which had been kindly loaned by Stan Meebes. These recordings had been made a mere twenty years since the actual invention of recording. Incidentally neither of these operatic Berliners is mentioned in Bauer.

A London-recorded Berliner was then played, which must have been one of Fred Gaisberg's first recordings in this country. It was E20C5 "Jack's the Boy" sung by H. Scott Russell.

All the foregoing Berliners had been made by the old zinc etching process, and reference was made to the various law cases which ensued over patents, and the injunction which was served on Berliner stopping him marketing his own invention. Meanwhile Eldridge Johnson, who had come off somewhat better over the court cases (hence his choice of the name 'Victor' as he was prevented from using the word 'gramophone') was experimenting with recording on wax. One of the first of these records was then played, No.3056 "Largo al Factotum" sung by Signor Francisco (Emilio de Gogorza).

Many singers had been unwilling to commit their voices to the primitive recording techniques but now improvements had taken place, and as is well known, Enrico Caruso had been enticed to make records in 1902. A red label disc from the December session was played, "Vesti la giubba". Other eminent singers followed, and examples of their recorded legacy were played. Probably the most expensive record issued was Tamagno's "Esultate" from *Otello* which plays for about 50 seconds and was priced at £1 in 1903! On Tamagno's insistence the label was pale green. Melba went one better in specifying that her lilac-label records must sell at 21/-. One of these was played, "Lo here the gentle lark", with piano by Landon Ronald and flute by E. Fransella.

It was not to be imagined that The Gramophone Co. were the only record makers, and attention was drawn to the activities of the Fonotipia Co. One of their early records No.39010 of 1904 was played and this was Maria Barrientos singing "Ah! non giunge" from *La Sonnambula*. A later disc with orchestral accompaniment was then played, Riccardo Stracciari in "Vien Leonore" from *La Favorita*.

The next big step in record-making was electric recording in the mid-twenties. To introduce this period, two recordings of the same aria by the same artists were played. These were "O terra addio" from *Aida*, sung by Ponselle and Martinelli. The previously unpublished 1924 acoustic version was followed by the 1925 electric one. The most striking improvement was in the orchestral accompaniment.

Electric recording made possible the recording of performances outside the studio and to illustrate this we heard part of Melba's farewell performance and speech at Covent Garden in June 1926. A further development was illustrated in an 'electric' Caruso disc. In 1933 a modern electrical orchestral recording was overlaid on the earlier Caruso record. The one played was "Celeste Aida" of 1911, re-recorded in June 1933. An original version was also played for our interest.

Surface hiss inherent with most 78s was largely caused by the material used for the discs. This was illustrated by playing one of the B.I.R.S. issues of Historic Masters, stamped from the original matrix but on modern vinylite. Although the recording was 1932 it was free from hiss. It was of Conchita Supervia singing "When I bring you coloured toys" with piano by Ivor Newton.

The 78 scene was brought to a close with two of the very last records issued, Boris Christoff in "Infelice e tuo Credevi" from Ernani and Maria Callas in the "Mad Scene" from Puritani.

The L.P. record being introduced in June 1950 overlapped the 78 period. An early L.P. of Walter Ludwig in the opening of Act 1 of Mozart's Seraglio was played and then Siepi and Hilda Gueden in Mozart's Marriage of Figaro. This latter was contemporary with the last of the 78s.

Attention was then turned to the advent of stereo recording which gives a good impression of the spread of the orchestra across the stage. An excerpt from Aida (the Chorus) with Karajan conducting was played. In this, an early attempt at stereo recording a serious work (as opposed to demonstration records) the results achieved by John Culshaw the recording engineer are still considered to be among the best.

Harking back to the Caruso electrics for a moment, it was remarked that Decca's did a similar experiment in 1960 with some 1952 Kathleen Ferrier recordings. They had managed to assemble the same orchestra on the original mono Ferrier recording. Both the stereo and original mono versions were played.

Another modern gimmick that was tried was computer processed recordings, in which the peak resonances unavoidable in the days of acoustic recording had been ironed-out. Caruso's "Di quella pira" (from DA113) was played in both the computerised version and the original. One critic had been quoted in the Press as saying that the original was "quite electrifying".

Finally, to bring the demonstration right up-to-date, a quadraphonic recording was tried. This was the Monserrat Caballe recording of Donizetti's Gemma di Vergy, incidentally, a first ever recording of this opera.

Thus as far as is possible the first 100 years of sound recording were covered in a most interesting way. We all know what an enormous amount of preparation goes into such a comprehensive programme and Gordon is to be congratulated on his preparation and presentation.

L.W.

The September Meeting at the "John Snow" 1977

At the September meeting of the London membership we were entertained by Frank Andrews who presented part two of his programme which he had called "Birthday Presents". This consisted of a selection of records originally put on sale in the month of September during the years 1931 to 1940 inclusive, one from each year, thus continuing the programme given earlier in the year when the years 1920 to 1930 were gone through in a similar fashion; the principle being that Frank was born in September 1920, and he therefore made the point that any records issued in September during the following years were potential "Birthday Presents".

Before launching into the year 1931, we were shown, by projection, a number of transparencies of record labels which had been in use in the years 1920 to 1930 but which had not been screened in the previous programme as these were new additions to the transparencies collection. Frank and the audience were indebted, once again, to Len Watts for bringing along his screen and projector and for operating the equipment in a flawless manner.

And so we came to 1931, for which year we were given a recital of all the labels which were currently on sale, a number of examples being shown on the screen. The formation of E.M.I. Ltd. earlier in the year was mentioned and a few other facts and figures about records and artists with a special mention of the flexible "Empire Record" from the Globe Record Co. Ltd. as our recitalist expressed the desire to see a copy of such a disc should any member happen to possess one - please note!!!!

The 1931 "Birthday Present" played was Jack Payne and the B.B.C. Dance Orchestra on Columbia DX273 - "Entrance of the Little Fauns" by G. Pierne.

For his twelfth anniversary, Frank stated that the British Homophone Co. Ltd. specially brought out a new labelled record, this being the 'Four-in-One', which had a fine enough spiral to accommodate two almost standard length recordings on each side and which process, it was opined, may have been connected with Adrian Sykes (our first Hon.

President) who had been working on a similar project, with a vertical cut, for this company a year or so earlier.

The fact that radio-gramophones were coming on to the market having dual speakers with differing sizes in their cones was mentioned and other accounts of what was happening in the world of records. Nine slides of labels current in 1932 were shown and the record chosen was 'Four-in-One' No.2, "The Flies Crawled up the Window", played and sung by Ray Starita and his Ambassadors. The second track on this side was not played.

With 1933 we heard of the misfortunes of Britain's first 'disc jockey', (a descriptive term not yet in use), Christopher Stone, left the B.B.C. to become Director of Programmes for Radio Luxembourg. This man Frank described as his Gramophone, as it was through Christopher Stone and his review of the succeeding month's output of disc records that he gained his first knowledge of the extensive repertoire of music and entertainment which had been, and was being, recorded. His leaving the B.B.C. was a sad day for many. Sir Dan Godfrey conductor on Columbia records for so long, also retired, and it was this company who claimed to have England's 'Greatest Bass Singer' and it was this singer we heard as the fourteenth 'present' in Crofts and Barker's song "The King's Own" DB1414 sung by Norman Allin.

1935 saw the coming of the magenta coloured labels from the E.M.I. company's stable, an example of which was shown on the screen along with other slides of labels of the year, five of which were selling for only one shilling each.

Gracie Fields' first recording for the 'Rex' label was Frank's present and its title's aptness was pointed out ("Turn 'Erbert's Face to the Wall, Mother") as Frank's first name is Herbert!!

During the course of the evening's proceedings we were given snippets of our presenter's own life story, and it was during 1936 that he left school to go out to work for his living and the beginnings of his record collection took shape. By the end of the year only two companies were left producing records for the public, Decca and E.M.I. Ltd.

Slavonic Dance No.5 (Dvorak) Czech Philharmonic Orchestra on H.M.V. B.8471 was played as September 1936's birthday gift.

1937 was the only year for which Frank could not provide a September released disc from his collection, and so he had recourse to a record issued a few weeks earlier, which was of his local cinema's organ, played by Donald Thorne, on Decca F.6413 "Hits of the Day" - Granada, Willesden (Christie-Unit Organ).

No programme would be complete without a Peter Dawson record when one is covering long periods of time, for his recording career extended from acoustic discs and cylinders to include monophonic long-play discs for E.M.I. Ltd. "His Master's Voice" B.8771 was issued in September 1938 and Peter Dawson's rendering of the Maori song from New Zealand, "Waiata Poi", was the side chosen.

The most unwelcome present he ever had, as Frank recalled, was the outbreak of the war with Germany the day before his nineteenth anniversary, although the war scare of a year earlier had prepared him for the worst of eventualities.

A disc was issued under the Columbia label, in the FB series, demonstrating the various methods of sounding the air-raid warnings, and the 'all-clear' signals, but this was ignored in favour of a Brunswick issue of a recording by his 'heart-throb' of those times, the singing film star, Deanna Durbin. We heard her singing Sir Humphrey Bishop's "Home, Sweet Home" accompanied by a harpist, [although the label gave the accompaniment as by an orchestra conducted by Charles Previn]!!

And so Frank came to his last actual 78 rpm record, issued in September 1940, prefaced by some more slides and the information that the "Sound Wave" disappeared from the bookstalls with the destruction by air-raid of its premises, that Bonci was reputed to have died, that Paul Whiteman had retired and that Ernest Hastings, entertainer at the pianoforte, had died on Frank's twentieth birthday anniversary.

A unique record issued at this time was of a running commentary of an air battle over the English Channel, on Decca SP.35.

The side played was from Parlophone-Odeon Series RO.20486, Richard Tauber singing a vocal version of Heyken's "Serenade"

To end the programme "I'm Twenty-One Today" sung by Jack Pleasants, the original singer of the song, was reproduced from a modern Long-Play record containing the "Shy Comedian's" 1911 recording, on World Records Ltd. SHB43.

Our Honorable Chairman, Christopher Proudfoot, rendered a warm-hearted vote of thanks on behalf of those in attendance, which included Mr. Stuart Upton and his Good Lady, both of the Vintage Light Music Society who were our very welcome guests.

Mr. Len Watts also received a vote of thanks for his 'flawless performance' with the projector and transparencies of record labels, a number of which he had photographed himself.

LONDON REPORTER

Deccatropicalia

Back in the days of the Empire (that far-flung Empire than which, as Milton Hayes would say, no other empire has ever been flung further) it was the custom of camera manufacturers to produce special models 'for tropical use'. These usually had brass-reinforced joints, and were often made of teak instead of mahogany. The number of such cameras which turn up in virtually mint condition leads me to suspect that many were bought simply as de luxe models, and never got further beyond our shores than the Isle of Wight. However, the gramophone trade latched on to the idea of 'Tropical' versions and it seems that these really were intended for the Tropics. HMV's Model 112, a double-spring, teak-cased variant of the ubiquitous 101 portable, does not appear in any of the English catalogues that I have seen, and you don't find many others, either. The Folding Apollo of 1921 was made of teak, but was not advertised as being in any way intended for hotter climes (indeed, it is less suited for a rugged existence than most ordinary portables). Decca catalogues of the mid-1920s included a teak version, designed for tropical use and constructed in such a way that the larger panels of wood were free to expand and contract, but you don't exactly come across

them in every junk-shop.

Well, I have managed to get my mitts on one of these Style No. 4 Deccas, and there is no question of its being Tropical; battered and scarred, filled with fine Indian dust, and worse, and powered by its third motor, a Paillard bearing a Bombay agent's stamp, this has an engraved silver label on the front giving the name, presumably, of its owner: 'Baghwanti'. Now, this is so very Tropical that I wonder whether perhaps I should have left it exactly as I found it; however, a teak Decca in presentable condition would be a not unattractive addition to any collection, and I have therefore embarked on its restoration. The motor is my biggest problem, for it seems that Style No. 4 had a different source of power from all the other Deccas. Apart from the fact that the winder is nearer the front of the machine than with the Paillard motors of the standard models, all I can tell you about this motor is what it says in a Decca catalogue; 'The motor is made on the newly-patented "Carry On" system of independent co-operating springs (British Patent No. 194589 and all foreign rights).' 'Independent co-operating springs' sounds to me like every double-spring motor I have ever seen, but if anyone can help me find one of these elusive power packs, or even tell me what I am looking for, I should be most grateful.

Christopher Proudfoot

Bull pup battles Victor dog

Large Crown Witnesses Struggle With Papier Mache Dog in Front of Portland Store of Bush & Lane Piano Co.

Portland, Ore., August 5 - When a white battle-scarred bull terrier started down Broadway the other day evidently he was looking for trouble. Opposite the entrance to the Bush & Lane piano store he encountered the fixed and immovable gaze of a three-foot papier-mache dog, which sits all day at the door listening, so they say, for "his master's voice".

The live dog looked up at the papier-mache dog and decided that he didn't like his looks. Perhaps the fact that the papier-mache dog paid no attention to him irritated him further. At any rate, the little bulldog seized the enormous muzzle of the papier-mache giant in a death grip. The two rolled on the pavement together. A crowd of 200 gathered to witness the struggle. When Edward Martin, one of the store employees, approached the building he thought a fire must have broken out. He dashed through the crowd, and taking in the situation at a glance, dragged both the contestants inside the store to settle the dispute.

Forcible methods had to be applied to separate the bulldog from his prey. It was only after the assailant's enthusiasm had been dampened by several gallons of water that the papier-mache giant was released, and the little bull, still breathing defiance, was ejected from the store.

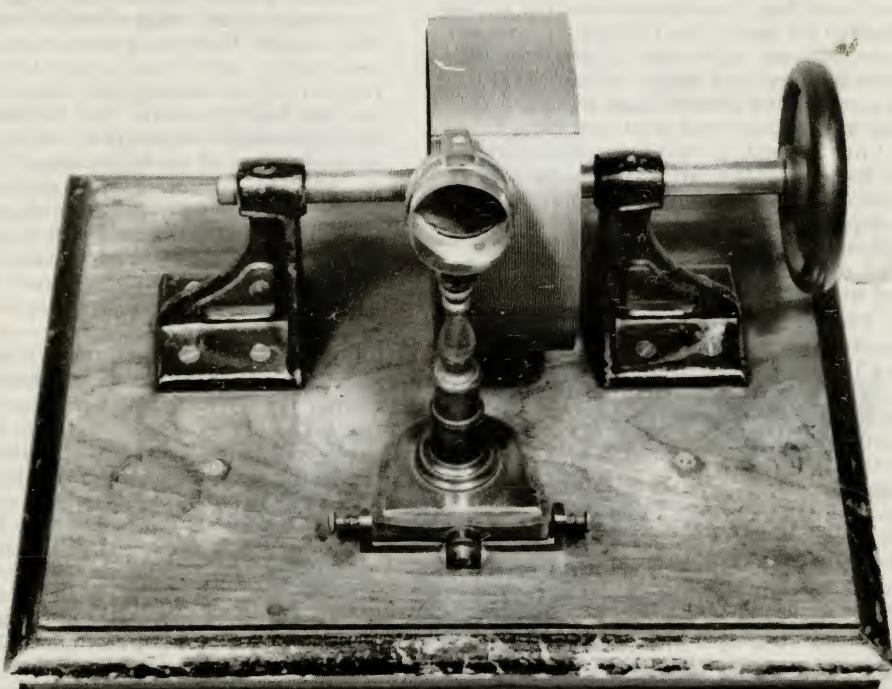
"Talking Machine World" - August 15th 1920



Christie's

South Kensington

85 Old Brompton Road
London SW7 3JS
Tel: 01-589 2422



The Phonograph Centenary Sale of Mechanical Music at Christie's South Kensington, will include talking machines on December 6th at 2 p.m. The sale of other mechanical music items on December 7th also at 2 p.m. (100 years and one day after the completion of Edison's first tinfoil machine) will include this fine TINFOIL PHONOGRAPH, a four-minute tone-arm cylinder Gramophone and an Edison Amberola 1A. Catalogues 60p for each post paid, or 85p for the two post paid, available about three weeks in advance.

A day to remember

by Dr. J.J. Hopkinson

On just an ordinary sort of day I visited an Accountants Office, and without any feeling of adventure or expectancy of the unusual approached the hole in the wall where usually a young pretty face appears to say "can I help you" - but didn't on this occasion, but instead I pushed my pretty face through the hole and peered around. In the dark depths of the big room an older more mature woman sat at a Typewriter. Her elegant figure giving out an aura of experience and quiet confidence.

I was inspired by what I saw, and expressed my feelings off the cuff, with an immediate, "you'd look wonderful sitting behind a dictaphone" - (I should explain I have a "phonograph phobia" which gives me a one track mind). She looked up and smiled, and said with profound dignity "that was my job for years" - "what, the ones with cylinders" I retorted. "Yes" she said and her eyes fell back to a Typewriter.

I gave a nervous cough and said "where?", she looked up and said - "where?" - "I am very sorry" I said, "where did you do the dictaphone job?" "Oh!" she said, "in London." "Do you think they might still have the dictaphones?" I remarked. "It's a long time ago," she said, "but I'll write and enquire from them if you want." "Oh! That would be lovely" I said. The Accountant walked in unsuspectingly and took me off.

After a week I got a letter from the elegant lady with the reply from London enclosed, saying, sorry, we got rid of them to an Insurance firm in London in 1940 when we changed to more modern equipment.

It was decided that I should contact the Insurance Company. This I duly did and got a reply saying, yes, they still had the machines which were stored in their basement as they no longer had anymore use for them and were having trouble disposing of them. They said they were very pleased to hear from me. I replied by return saying I would see them in about two weeks as it necessitated

travelling three hundred miles. They replied by return to say they knew little about these machines but to help me they had separated "5 Cutters, 7 Secretary and 8 Recording Machines" to one side for inspection but would leave the rest for me to sort out when I arrived.

I waited two long weeks and on the day moved off with my Van and, after seven hours, arrived in the City having in my head the directions to my destination. Unfortunately the vital road I was to go down had been closed, so, I abruptly stopped in the middle of 5 lanes of traffic and it was quite an experience to see 5 lines of traffic through my back window thundering down on me as I threaded my way in reverse back to a previous turn off. It is interesting that I never heard a murmur from the traffic - you Londoners are the most tolerant drivers in the world or perhaps they read my Registration Plate and put me down as another idiotic northerner! I soon arrived at the very large 4 storey building and parked right outside on the only 16 ft. length of road in the City which had not got double lines (later I was told they had been wiped off an hour before I arrived for repainting).

I sprang out of the Van feeling ecstatic. I was here and now to see my wonderful prize - banged the Van doors and immediately realised I had locked my keys inside the Van which was standing on double lines with the City rush roaring all around me. I staggered into the Porters Lodge saying I was expected, and was the Doctor from Ulverston. In a short while the Manager arrived, and a wonderful helpful man he was. I told him of the tragedy of the locked Van and he said "forget it, I will get the A.A. to come - I have got some tea laid on and I will introduce you to the V.I.P.s in my office - come on!" I was taken to his office, duly introduced, and, as we had tea I explained that these machines weren't everybody's 'cup of tea' and hoped he didn't want too much for them. He agreed eagerly on the price of a Cigar for each machine. I was very satisfied.

After tea he led me into a cool, dark massive basement which would have parked 20 cars, switched on several banks of lights, and behold, I saw a sea of dictaphones, row after row after row. "How - how, m-many are there?" I stammered, "Oh! About 130 I

think!!" - I had a quick sniff at an anti-fainting pad in my pocket (Doctors always carry these) and sat down quickly on what turned out to be an Edison Shaver Machine.

"I'll leave you for a bit and you can sort them out," he said. After three hours I had put aside 10 machines, 3 sets of 3 and one for the good lady back home who started all this. All the machines I saw were on stands with castors, some open and other later models with cupboards incorporated, dating from 1915 to 1928 and many undated. There were Transcription Machines, Shaving Machines and Recording Machines as far as the eye could see. The Transcribers had Stethoscope attachments and some with posh 'Hi Fi' Earphones.

After three hours, my Manager friend returned saying the A.A. man had arrived and before we left the basement, was I interested in spares and extras for the machines which were in that big box (4ft x 3ft x 3ft) before he chucked them out! It was full of leads, extra pneumatic foot peddles and resistors for dictaphones. I said these were great - "in that case" he said, "perhaps you would like these Cylinders, for the machines there are two or three dozen of them!"

A dozen of these Cylinders had the original business dictation on them and make very interesting listening, taking one back to the old days.

At this point I needed air and went out to the Van, where I informed the A.A. man that I didn't want the windows breaking or the body work hacksawing to get in. He touched his cap and smiled saying "there won't be a scratch on your car, Sir" and he opened it in 5 minutes true to his word. "Now" said the Manager, "we will get the machines in the Van." We wheeled them into the lift and reaching ground floor level, packed them into the Van. Having completed the manoeuvre he said, "This won't do, they'll wobble about like this, you need some packing - hang on" and returned with two more machines and, packing them in, said, "that will do the trick, I'm not charging you for them."

I had had a grand day and a lot of laughs, this Manager had a wonderful sense of humour. It had been worth the visit - 9 + 2 machines for the price of a box of Cigars. The Cylinders and spares were no charge. He also gave me the machine for the

good lady at home for introducing us.

I closed and locked the Van door and held out a grateful hand. As he shook my hand he smiled and then a faint puzzled frown moved across his face as he uttered, "Pleasant journey home. You know, I just cannot understand why you offered me anything at all for those machines!"



"2 BIG 'UNS"

C.L.P.G. Society



TOP BRASS: (left to right) Dave Roberts, Christopher Proudfoot, Goodwin Ive, V.K. Chew (Science Museum), George Frow and Arthur Ord-Hume (President, Musical Box Society of Great Britain).



A young visitor enthralled by the Edison Bell Picturegram.



Our President, George Frow, seen chatting to Mr. Richard Bebb.

Exhibition Pictures



The Hon. Secretary, John McKeown (left) chats to Dave Roberts, Exhibition Display Organiser.



Mr. L.G. Wood (left) Managing Director of E.M.I., talking to Christopher Proudfoot. In the background is the Melba Gramophone.



In the Columbia corner, a visitor listens to the tape.

Correspondence & Letters

The University of Rochester
EASTMAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC
Rochester, New York 14604

Dear Bill,

In Hillandale News No.96 (June 1977) your London Correspondent kindly covered the playing of our taped program No. 6 at the Edison National Historic Site of last October. On Page 166 he seemed to know of Ray Wile, my co-M.C., but of me he knew "nothing". Would you kindly pass along to London Correspondent the enclosed information, which will probably be more than he ever wants to learn of me?

Actually in the same issue of HN I am mentioned in the Merritt Sound Recording ad on Page 179 as Ada Jones' devoted researcher. As the recent "brag sheet" indicates, I am also a professor at the Eastman School of Music of the University of Rochester, a performer, and a composer. English ties include my appearing in the publisher's catalogue of Stainer and Bell, London, and in the International Who's Who in Music, Cambridge.

Very likely London Correspondent (does he have a name?) not only doesn't know who I am, but he doesn't even care. I thought it might be fun to let him know I was reading him anyway (just a little colonial humour!). I have also enclosed a program for the recent 100th Anniversary Celebration at the Edison Site this month when I played for Gladys Rice and Douglas Stanbury. Last spring I hosted another Evening with Pioneer Recording Artists and presented "Ada Jones, the First Lady of the Phonograph". Those programs are included.

I hope the Manchester branch plans to mention Ada Jones at its meeting September 24th. It's being held in Oldham, the birthplace of the first woman to become popular through phonograph records.

Thanks for passing the "who I am" information along to the London Correspondent who wrote for your June issue. I am looking forward to the next as usual.

Sincerely,

Milford H. Fargo

You might tell him I am also "an American member of our Society."

Digitized by srujanika@gmail.com

Dear Sir

I feel that I must write and complain about the advertising of the C.O.L.P. & G.S. Exhibition. In the April and June editions of Hillandale News it stated that the Exhibition would be open from August 13th - 27th.

18th - 27th.
A couple of friends and myself spent a good £15 on fares, train and tube, on Monday 22nd August only to find a poster outside the Institute of Recorded Sound stating that the Exhibition closes on Mondays, it was thanks to the Science Museum and Harrods who also put on a show that our day was not wasted.

I've just received my copy of Hillandale News, August edition, today, 24th August. In it is a yellow slip of paper stating times of the Exhibition, I felt this would have been better placed in June's edition so that other people like myself and friends would be saved an unnecessary journey.

Yours faithfully,

T. Charlesworth

London W.2

Dear Bill

The article on P.155 of the June '77 magazine "Hoagy Carmichael on Record" was not contributed by me - although it is assigned as such.

I enclose an article for the August edition, please acknowledge my new address above, or office-hours phone [REDACTED]

I think the article in the magazine is from "The Stardust Road" by Hoagy Carmichael. Could you please put an ad in for me to buy (or loan) this book.

Yours sincerely

Barry Raynard.
Committee Member

"Can anyone help?" - Ed

Dear Bill,

I very much enjoyed Ray Phillips' article on unusual cylinders. Might I add a few comments for publication? (Ref. Aug. issue)

The smallest cylinders must surely be the $\frac{1}{2}$ " diameter ones (4" in length) made in 1886 for the hand-powered Gramophones, of solid wax. One of these is currently on display at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

The 6" long cylinder, 2" in diameter, referred to by Ray, and made of solid wax by Columbia was called the Type E cylinder and was available in the 1895 Columbia catalog. Unlike the earlier Ozocerite cylinders which were dipped to produce the wax coating, these were first cast separately and then machined to accept the cardboard tube insert. The wax is brown, unlike the earlier black ones, and were designed to record for eight minutes.

The largest cylinders were not the Celeste, but the Multiplex Grand Cylinders, which were of the usual 5" diameter, but also 14" long. Several barrels of these were shipped to the Shah of Iran, with pre-recorded selections. They were recorded two ways first, with three sound tracks to be played simultaneously, giving a playing time of about 3 minutes, and second, with a continuous track, played with only one reproducer, playing for 9 minutes at 120 rpm. This was demonstrated at the 1904 St. Louis Exposition.

The small souvenir cylinders were called "Napkin ring" cylinders by Columbia and were also provided for special occasions, such as banquets. They had the same type box, with a space for the photo and the title. They were also on sale in 1906, at dealers' shops.

The Ozocerite cylinder referred to as being in the Ward Harris collection, and having a pre-recorded selection, was entitled "Patrol Comique, played by J.A. Bernstine." It is possible that this was made for the 1893 Chicago World's Fair. The grooving was 160 threads per inch.

Other oversize cylinders were the Kinetophone cylinders produced in 1912/1913. These were like Blue Amberols, unbreakable, and used for sound synchronization for Edison films in New York City at the Bijou Theatre. I do not have the exact dimensions, but they were approximately 5" by 10" and were thus the largest unbreakable cylinders.

The most valuable cylinder (intrinsically anyway) was the 22k solid gold cylinder presented to Edison by his Jobbers in 1906. This still exists.

The American Edison mailing cylinder was $\frac{3}{4}$ " in diameter and 3 and $\frac{7}{8}$ " long, with a pitch of 100 threads per inch, and an rpm of 120. The finest

thread Edison cylinders, also produced on a limited basis in the early 90's, was a special 400"/", with a diameter of 2.75", a length of 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ " and an rpm of 200. These were "brown wax".

Bill, I wonder if you or any of your readers might wish an original Centennial stamp poster issued by the U.S. Postal Service to publicize the 100th anniversary stamp. It is quite large, 2 feet by three feet, and very colourful, indeed better designed than the stamp itself. I have obtained a small quantity of these, and would consider trading them for a small quantity of unusual cylinder boxes, with or without the records, such as Ebonoid, Phrynis, Star, Nicole, Bulldog, World, Colonial, Markona, Diamond, Le Cahit, Gloria, Imperial, Hugens y Agosta, New Century, Pathe Celeste, or likewise. The poster is illustrated on the cover of the most recent APM, enclosed.

All best wishes this centennial year. I have heard from good comments about your display at the BIRS which we will cover in a forthcoming issue.

Best. Allen Koenigsberg



“Dem Washboard blues”

In the beginning of the roaring twenties there were many negro musicians from the Southern States, who were trying to introduce their particular brand of music, Dixie, to the midwest and the eastern states of America. Amongst these musicians were the brothers Johnny and “Baby” Dodds who played the clarinet and drums respectively. They, like many of their colleagues had a small band and had been attracted to the numerous night-clubs on the South Side in Chicago. In company with their colleagues, however, they found that life in the midwest was not “milk and honey” and they were going through a pretty sticky time as far as finance was concerned.

Conditions gradually got from bad to worse and eventually the Dodds brothers were forced to pawn their instruments. However, at that critical point a night-club owner, of no certain character and reputation, contracted the Dodds Brothers to form a band at the “Club 29”. Although the band had its instruments in the pawn-shop, by scraping and borrowing the band became almost complete. The missing link was Baby Dodds’ drum around which the outfit was centred. But this did not deter the enthusiastic drummer, who turned up to beat his thumping rhythm on a washboard that he had stolen from his landlady. Very soon the band became well known, through having a washboard, which was played so well that it became an integral part of its music, presenting a well defined and an original background.

Although Baby Dodds was definitely not the first person to use a washboard for this purpose, as indeed it had been used in music hall acts for the last quarter of a century, he showed there was infinite scope to the effects that could be made on a washboard. Such an artist used a washboard to make himself an extremely popular and rich man, who, in the late 30’s and the early 40’s became one of America’s best comedians. He was the “musical depreciator de-luxe” Lindley Armstrong Jones, or better known as Spike Jones (and His City Slickers).

Spike Jones began his career with his washboard and a small novelty band and he used

to pull popular songs to pieces. He had a phenomenal rise to fame and by 1943, when he was at the height of his popularity, he was featured regularly in films and radio broadcasts and frequently recorded for R.C.A. Victor. At this time, however, he recorded a complete set of records of the “Casse Noisette” but he put words to the dances. For instance, he substituted for the Russian Dance a song called “They Dance on the Seat of their Pants.”

Gradually people became tired of Spike Jones’ humour; particularly when he started using his tin whistles and washboards on serious music, “Liebestraum” and the “William Tell Overture” to mention two records. Anyhow, the general sense of humour is changing and the public prefer quiet sophisticated humour nowadays and can no longer find the time for dancing the Charleston or such dances as Johnny and Baby Dodds can offer. So as Spike Jones fades away so the life of the washboard in entertainments dies and with the advent of new soap flakes and electric washing machines it is more than likely that in another dozen years the washboard will have sunk into complete oblivion.

The above article was anonymously written by a school boy in July 1951.

I suppose what he’s really talking about has since become to be known as “Trad” (Traditional Jazz), and then “Skiffle” - which led, in the late fifties, to Rock ‘n Roll, which is still with us.

I believe that the Spike Jones records have been re-issued recently. As with so many vogues, after being the fashionable “in” thing, they become “passe” or “corny” - to eventually re-appear as “nostalgia”.

Barry Raynaud

Joe Pengelly's Century on Radio 4

A legend has grown that every overseas visitor to these shores says that our policemen are marvellous. The legend may not be entirely true but it is in my opinion generally so, and if I were asked why it is I think my answer would be on the lines that it is because their powers are so great and so seldom exercised. Perhaps we in Britain have retained our basic freedom of expression when others have faltered because we exercise it so little and certainly there is general belief that certain bodies must never be criticised - Royalty, The Church of England and, more recently, the Trades Union Congress and the B.B.C.

I have never totally accepted this convention and have been known rashly to make adverse comment on the B.B.C., especially on their obvious intention never to play acoustically recorded material and when they do, to play it so badly that it never achieves a following, through their activities. I recall a McCormack programme, which I taped and rubbed off without replay because of the bad quality, a Lauder programme consisting mainly of dreadful recordings from the thirties when the voice and freshness had long departed, a Marie Lloyd programme made up primarily of recordings of Marie Junior and Barbara Windsor, etc. etc.

It is a pleasure, therefore, to comment on the fine quality of the recent programme by our West country member Joe Pengelly. Berliners, Two minutes waxes, Blue Amberols, many early discs and a Diamond Disc item all expertly transcribed on to tape with professionally delivered commentary written by Joe. Full marks.

It is so difficult to fault that one ended up wondering how the non-interested listener might have reacted. To describe vertical cut, wax cylinders, celluloid, Pathe discs and many other technical items in the course of an hour must have had the listener, with negligible technical knowledge confused to say the least of it but it of course raises the age old problem of for whom such a programme is intended.

It is easy to say for whom the disc-jockeyed pop shows are for (but I am naturally restrained by the requirements of public decency) but Radio 4 programmes are at a more intelligent level but not usually specialist. I do not think the material in the programme would have held the musically inclined, spellbound and there was clearly inadequate time to deal with changes of taste which occurred at a faster rate in the early years of this century than at any other time, a facet which I consider as important or more so than the technical changes. Perhaps this is the key to the few inadequacies in this programme. Clearly a single one hour programme is not sufficient to deal with the subject and it is too long to make a catchy trivial popular item and clearly the B.B.C. should give Joe a regular Radio 4 spot to allow him to do justice to the subject without the time constraints.

One final point. The programme opened with a superb playing "Love will find a way" by Jose Collins played on a gramophone with 22 foot long horn. I am not a discographical researcher, but was it really the 1917 recording? It certainly was not the recording on Columbia L.1155 which was recorded during the run of the "Maid of the Mountains" commencing February 1917. To me, however, the voice which I normally admire sounded older and more tired and hardly suitable for "Carmen" as Melba thought despite the quality of the reproduction. If this was licence then it was justified but I would prefer my own less adequate reproduction of the magnificence of L.1155. This final point perhaps illustrates something about my own attitudes : but I hope it indicates that there are so many facets to this hobby.

Phonographs & Gramophones: the Edison centenary in Edinburgh

The Edison centenary celebrations in Great Britain began with a bang as the month of July opened and talking machine enthusiasts from all quarters of this isle (and even some from across the Atlantic) congregated at The Royal Scottish Museum for the opening of the Exhibition there and the one-day Symposium which followed.

The Exhibition was opened by Lynn Wightman, head of the Edison National Historic Site at Orange, New Jersey on the evening of July 1st, and what a treasure-house awaited our inspection! As an indication of the overall quality, perhaps it is enough to say that of the 158 exhibits, no less than five were original tin-foil phonographs, one of them perhaps the first tape-recorder insofar as it used a ribbon of foil passing from one spool to another; and there were two replicas, one life-size and the other a miniature in solid silver, of Edison's first tinfoil design. All the exhibits were displayed in beautiful condition, with excellent explanatory captions, and some interesting off-shoots of the talking machine were shown, including a device for informing an enquirer at the other end of a telephone line the depth of water in a well or reservoir and another for dialling 999 and summoning the Police when intruded upon by a burglar. The Exhibition closes on October 2nd, and will thus be over by the time this reaches you, so that it would be superfluous for me to say 'Go and see it if you have not already done so', and it would be equally superfluous to describe the exhibits in detail when there is an excellent catalogue available for £2 which every phonograph and gramophone collector should have on his bookshelf.

The Symposium on July 2nd was an occasion of absorbing interest, of scholarship and even of entertainment. Nine papers were presented, and here again there is no need for me to describe them in detail, as they are published, with illustrations, at £5. The first paper, presented by Raymond Wile,

was probably the most important, covering the invention and early development of the Edison phonograph. Professor Wile is one of that very small band of historians who work only from primary sources, and he has shed much new light on this early period. Some of us had been fortunate enough to hear him a week before at the London meeting of this Society, when he was talking about the Volta Laboratories, and two such sessions leave one hoping that a book will emanate from this author in the not too distant future. Our own President then gave a remarkably comprehensive survey of the cylinder phonograph's history in Great Britain, after which Joe Pengelly gave a demonstration of his remarkable achievement in reproducing Blue Amberols (and other indestructible cylinders) electrically. Alas, because the schedule was rather tight, he played only half of each cylinder, and many of the audience were disappointed when Peter Dawson's Volunteer Organist was cut off in full flood.

This virtuoso performance was followed by some bloke spouting about HMV and other gramophones and then one of the 'locals', Peter Adamson from St. Andrews, gave a detailed study of the five-inch and seven-inch Berliner discs. Graham Melville-Mason, of Edinburgh University, then gave an interesting and at times entertaining account of the surprising things that were done to orchestral scoring for acoustic recording studios, and after lunch Boris Semeneff, whose name has been spread far beyond the Scottish borders by his little book on Record Collecting, discussed the relationship between the gramophone and the opera. Jimmy Blades, perhaps the most famous of timpanists, then took the stage for what was undoubtedly the most entertaining talk of the day, being a series of light-hearted reminiscences of his 'Fifty Years of Percussing with Recording Bands and People.' Graham Melville-Mason's second appearance, to discuss 'The Gramophone as Furniture' might perhaps have suited an audience of design students reared in the Pevsner school more than one of machine enthusiasts, particularly as one or two references to certain HMV models were at variance with those given in an earlier paper, but the subject is one which has been insufficiently treated hitherto, and it is good to see some thoughts given an airing. Finally, we heard an exposition, with sound illustrations, of the technique of transferring historic recordings on to L.P., by Bryan Crimp of E.M.I.

It is hard to convey, in a brief account such as this, anything of the atmosphere of that meeting; I wonder if as many people with an interest in our subject have ever before been gathered together

in one place in this country. The amount of information distilled, the opportunity of meeting so many fellow-enthusiasts who were previously but names on a list, and the sight of all those splendidly presented machines in the Exhibition will make this a weekend which I am sure most of those present will remember with pleasure for a long time to come. To Dr. Alistair Thomson, who conceived and organised both the Exhibition and the Symposium, we must raise our hats in respect and gratitude.

The Recordings of 1907 in Britain

BY FRANK ANDREWS

Why 1907?

Well, every year's events, with respect to the history of sound recordings, differs from any other year one may choose and most years had at least one event which, from somebody's point of view, had a certain significance, therefore, as 1907 was just another year in the passing cavalcade of sound recordings there is no particular importance to this year which demands that it should be dealt with in preference to other years and the only reason I have chosen 1907 is because it just so happens that this is the year for which I have comprehensive details for the great majority of cylinder and disc recordings which were made available to the public during that year. If you want to know of two events which were peculiar to 1907 these were: (A) it was the first full year of Pathé Discs, they having been introduced in December 1906, and, (B) 1907 was the only year in which the Sovereign Record enjoyed its short existence. The only doubtful point, which causes me some concern, is that I cannot determine whether or not J.G. Graves had yet begun to issue his "Ariel Grand Records". If any member has some hard facts about when the first of this label was offered by this Sheffield entrepreneur, I would be most grateful to hear from him or her.

The number of artists credited with titles during 1907 adds up to more than 875, which number includes "anonymous" contributors to the total repertoire and also the inevitable "pseudonymous" artists.

All these artists and their efforts were sold on 23 different "makes" of disc and cylinder records which included 13 lateral cut discs, 6 types of vertical-cut, gold-moulded, 2-minute-wax cylinders, 3 types of vertical cut discs and one type of 2-minute indestructible cylinder. Perhaps you would care to identify them from the following list?

Beka Records, Clarion, Columbia, Edison, Edison Bell, Favorite, Fonotipia, Gramophone, Homophone, Imperial, Lyrophon, Melograph, Neophone 'System Michaelis', Neophone "System White", Odeon, Pathé, Russell, Sovereign, Star (U.S.A.), Sterling, White and Zonophone. (I know there are only twenty-two names!)

Many of the pseudonyms used during the year have their real owners identified, others remain unknown and, in fact, what some may consider to be pseudonyms may well turn out to be real names of what, to us today, are rather obscure and minor artists of their day. Who knows?

Many of the "anonymous" artists, especially on recordings of German sources, should become identifiable from German catalogues, supplements and mentions in the German trade periodicals, (of which there were at least two) once the face or single side numbers of the discs are known. Member Mr. Keessen of Holland has already identified Jan Spewiak as being one of the anonymous singers on the Homophone Records as issued in Britain, not named either on the labels or in the Homophone Records catalogues issued in Britain.

"In the Groove but out of the Rut".

For some reason peculiar to my nature, recordings of unusual fare have always interested me, records which add a greater variety to the predictable fare advertised each month within any given era, and the total output for 1907 was not lacking in examples of these "minority interests" recordings. Here are some of those which may well be worth looking out for if it is the unusual you are after. I shall go through in an alphabetical order of artists.

American anonymous Ocarina soloist on Columbia disc and an anonymous French Ocarina Trio, also on Columbia discs.

Anonymous German artists, a cornet quartette on Homophone, a flute and horn duo on Lyrophon, a flugel horn soloist on Odeon, and a flute and violin duo on Beka. On Columbia an anonymous Russian Balalaika soloist.

Recordings of people talking, paradoxically, never abounded for use on the "talking machines", but 1907 had a fair number of this type of, what are now, collectors' pieces. The Archbishop of Westminster Cardinal Bourne, was to be heard on a Gramophone

Record, and General Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army was available on Columbia cylinders or discs. The Reverend Dr. Clifford, on Edison Bell cylinders was concerned about the populace's spiritual well-being, with a two-minute sermon, and Maud Courtenay recited on Zonophone Records. Another "talker" for the Gramophone & Typewriter Ltd. was the Reverend Canon Fleming; but the Neophone Record on the British lists styled "Japanese Educational Record" must have been the slowest seller of the year!

Much more likely to sell in greater numbers, but still for a restricted market, were the Fonotipia recordings of the French author, Victorien Sardou, reading passages from his own works, and, still with the "French Connection", Malcolm Scott could be had in monologue style on Pathé Disc.

Sir J.G. Tollermache Sinclair, Baronet, recited on Gramophone Records, Odeon Records and Zonophones, whilst Montagu Stephens did likewise on Russell Indestructible cylinders.

Another knight, Sir William Treloar, Lord Mayor of London, made an appeal for his Cripples' Homes Fund on Sterling cylinders and also performed recitations on Gramophone Records. Another "G & T" artist to recite was Lewis Waller.

Two artists, not with unusual recordings, but who have the unusual about them were Dalton Baker, and Thomas Constantino, both baritones.

Dalton Baker was advertised as "Britain's Greatest Baritone" by Odeon Records who once informed that their artist was to be heard at Concerts in Liverpool.

In 1922, when the International Talking Machine Co.m.b.H. published an English "Odeon Records" catalogue, the long list of Dalton Baker's records was then credited to our ex-Honorary Member, George Baker, and as members will know from a back issue of 'Hillendale News', George Baker wrote to say that he made Odeon Records, but no records ever appeared under his name on the Odeon label before the Great War of 1914. So the question is, did George Baker first appear at concerts as Dalton Baker, or was Dalton Baker, a pseudonym for George on Odeon and Columbia records? If any reader has a Dalton Baker record could they please confirm that the artist really is George Baker? Whilst on the subject of George, it has been claimed for him that he made cylinder recordings, but I believe the only cylinder recordings George Baker made were the large Pathé Master Recordings from which they pantographed their various sized disc masters.

Len "Pathé" Watts, has no evidence of George on Pathé wax cylinders.

Now, who was Thomas Constantino, the Italian baritone? His titles were mostly operatic of which there were a number on Neophone "Michaelis System" Disc Phonograph Records. He is not mentioned in Girard and Barnes book devoted to a listing of vertical cut recordings, (but then nor are any of the other Neophone operatic artists) neither is he mentioned in "Bauer" as having any lateral cut type of discs. Thomas seems a strange fore-name to the Italian surname of Constantino! Can this man be identified?

Pianoforte soloists were comparatively rare birds, but I do not propose to deal with the 1907's crop at this point except to point out that one man who was to play a large part in forming successful disc repertoires for both J.E. Hough Ltd. (Edison Bell), and the Columbia Gramophone Co. Ltd. as a staff member of both companies, was issued with a disc pianoforte solo or two in 1907, and this was Joseph Batten, on Neophone, one of the companies he mentions as having worked for in his book, "Jo Batten's Book - The Story of Sound Recording".

If pianoforte soloists were few and far between in 1907, pianoforte duos were even more so. The only example of which I know was on Favorite Records where the artists were Herr & Frau Ree but whether one or two pianos were used seems to have received no mention.

Brass Bands were seldom recorded in the early years of the century, the Black Dyke Mills Band were on Gramophone "Monarchs" in 1903 and Bessies o' the Barn on Columbia in 1906 and Neophone in 1905, and they were again re-issued on Neophone "System White" in 1907.

Still with brass instruments, was the Salvation Army International Staff Band on Zonophone Records. Although a "brass band" in composition of instruments, Salvation Army bands were, and are, outside of the Brass Band Movement proper.

The Imperial Trombone Quartette, (an acquired "taste" in my opinion) were available on System White Neophones or on their "stable-mate", the "White" gold moulded cylinder records.

Monsieur Cambelle was to be had on Odeon playing a saxophone solo and the Meistersingers Brass Quartette were to be had on both types of Neophone discs.

It was not only the brass players who made 1907 a "windy year", there was quite a large clutch of sifflers, the artists who put their teeth at risk by whistling! These included Joe Belmont on Edison cylinders, Charles Capper on Russell cylinders and Sovereign Records, Guido Gialdini on Gramophone, Homophone, Odeon, Sovereign and Zonophone

Records, Arthur Melrose on Sterling cylinders, W. Taft on Zonophone, R. Taylor on Sterling and George Tramer on Gramophone. Homophone also had Max Lambe whistling down the horn.

A most unusual disturber of the air was Joe Cheers on Zonophone, who both sang and SNEEZED his way into posterity!

The mightiest wind instrument of all, the organ, was also issued on record in 1907 with Omar Letory on Odeon playing an unspecified organ, sometimes playing his own compositions; and Phil Longdale on Russell cylinders, played that rarely recorded instrument, the bassoon.

Wind in the reeds was also available on an Edison Bell cylinder upon which was recorded the Oldham Prize Concertina Band. A.J. Scott, accordionist, was recorded by Columbia and Odeon and also appeared on Sovereign; the only other accordion player being Kimmble on Edison cylinders, and Frank Cooper played melodeon for Edison Bell cylinders.

Among the unusual string instrumentals were Jose Ramirez on the Bandurria on Imperial Records, the Mandolin Quartette from Stockholm on Favorite and solo artist Carlo D'Amato, mandolin, on Zonophone.

A "String Band" conducted by Monsieur Lafitte of Paris was on Favorite and Columbia had a harpist named Surth (no fore-name?) who also played piano, and Favorite had the "Daddy of them all" with the Original Gipsy Band whose leader, reputed to be a genuine gipsy, was celebrated as having fathered 37 children!

It was a good year for Jewish Cantors, and singers of songs of interest to the Jewish communities. Neophone had three Cantors in H. Davids, J.L. Geffen and E. Spiro. Max Gusofsky (also as D. Shainkmann), on Zonophone, with, on the same label, Herr Seidler- "Kogelnest", and Herr Swengalin.

One of the first female singers to record had been Miss Syria Lamonte who made Berliner records for the Gramophone Company when they were at [Maiden Lane, W.C., now here she was again with her soprano voice on Columbia disc records in 1907.

Other unusual artists were the Magdalen College Glee Singers of Oxford University, and the Sheffield Choir conducted by Dr. Henry Cowerd, both on Odeon records, many of the latter selling well in Canada when the choir visited that country.

Another slow selling line must have been the songs in the Gujarati language of an Indian theatrical production, sung by Miss Pheroze K.N. Kabraji on System Michaelis Neophones, issued seventy years too early judging by the large Indian population in

Britain at the present time!

Brian Williams was a "Boy Treble" on Odeon Records, Ivor Wright another on Columbia and there was a "Boy Soprano" to be heard with the St. Ambroise Church Choir of Paris on Imperial Records, this latter record was introduced with a violin and French horn obligato.

Geo. P. Watson, appears to have been the only yodeller of 1907, available on Imperial Records.

Arthur Gilbert, music hall artist also known as Arthur Osmond, made comic song recordings for Edison cylinders in 1906 but his endeavours did not stop at performing, for he became an assistant recording engineer for the National Phonograph Co. Ltd. which company he left to become chief recording engineer for Beka Records in London, then going over to the Sound Recording Co. Ltd.. He afterwards left England for the Far East where he recorded for businesses native to those parts. He was never to return to England; he died in the nineteen-twenties. In 1907 on Columbia, Neophone, Edison Bell, White and Zonophone.

Two intriguing records ends this survey of the unusual. "The Zig-Zacs Burlesque" on Edison Bell cylinders may have been by the celebrated Music Hall mind-reading act or it may have been a "send-up", and on Zonophone were titles saying "Salvation Army Processional", but whether these were "mock-ups" or actual recordings by the Salvation Army I do not know.

When I next deal with 1907 I shall mention those recordings "Not in Bauer" and, string and woodwind players, and pianists.

“with reference to Queen Victoria’s Cylinder Recording”

I received the following:-

Dear Mr. Andrews,

“La reine d’Angleterre a change des compliments avec le Negus d’Abyssinie sans avoir eu besoin de faire un voyage dans ce pays.

On lui a presente un phonographe a son residence de l’Isle de Wight; l’appareil reproduisait les compliments du Negus. La reine, enchantee, a repondu en enregistrant un cylindre flatteur L’appareil et les cylindres de Menelik proviennent des etablissements Pathe Freres.”

[Bulletin Phonographique et Cine matographique 1899, p.48]

So now we know!

Andy’s snippets

April 1909

There has always been considerable mystery regarding the salaries received from the talking-machine companies by operatic artistes who make talking-machine records. Some light on the subject was thrown this week, when Elsa de Gorgoza, wife of Emilio de Gorgoza, one of the most popular of living baritones, testified that her husband receives over £1,000 a year from the Victor Talking Machine Co. for making records, and received £7,000 last year from his concert tour. She is suing for a separation. De Gorgoza’s counsel, in replying, said that the baritone only made £4,500 a year. The De Gorgoza records are good sellers throughout the country. But the most popular records are said to be those of Caruso. Just what this tenor gets from the Victor Company is not known. The women singers, such as Eames, Farrar, Shumann-Heink and Homer, get good-sized cheques from the Victor Company.

As the result of more than ten years’ labour, says the “New York Tribune” a device which reproduces sounds from phonograph records as distinctly as if the real origin of the sound were directly before the listener, has been invented by Dr. John H. Vanmater, Mayor of Atlantic Highlands. The mechanical harshness of the phonograph is eliminated.

A record talking machine order is that recently closed by John H. Dorian, manager in the Far East for the Columbia Co. The order calls for nearly a million dollars worth of machines, double-sided and

single-sided records. It was placed by an American company, distributors of general merchandise in China, who have a fleet of house-boats, which traverse all the principal rivers of that country, and whose warehouses and depots are located throughout the interior at points inaccessible to the ordinary traders. In fact, some of their outposts are so far inland that it takes fourteen days by camel to reach them.

March 1909

A Gramophone concert was given on Wednesday, February 17th, in the St. Thomas’ Parish Rooms, by Messrs. W. E. Spear and Co., Gramophone specialists of 412, Stapleton Road, Bristol. The programme consisted of records by Melba, Patti, Tetrazzini, Caruso, and others. The vast audience, numbering about 400 people, enjoyed the singing of the above artistes, and comic songs by Billy Williams and Harry Lauder. These latter well-known artistes kept them in roars of laughter. During the interval Mr. Spear asked the Rev. Mr. Boodle, the vicar of the St. Thomas’ Church, to announce to the audience that a small collection be taken in aid of the Italian Earthquake Fund. The amount collected amounted to the sum of £1 12s, which was then handed by Mr. Spear to the vicar, asking him to send it to the Lord Mayor’s Fund.

Public talkers

Park Recitals

Owing to the successful results from the experiments made last year in the matter of talking machine recitals to the public parks the L.C.C. has decided this year to give forty-five performances of three hours’ duration. These will take place at

Paddington Recreation Ground, Marylebone; Paragon Gardens, New Kent Road; Boundary Street, Shoreditch, and in other parks in the various parts of the metropolis.

Before long MAY 1909

(Phonograph gives evidence. Machine-made testimony admitted by Pittsburg Magistrate - Newspaper Headline.)

Court Officer (in the near future) - Do you solemnly swear that evidence which you give in this case will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth? So help you Edison. - Puck.

Elgar's New Song

"FOLLOW THE COLOURS"

At a time when the military song is very much in demand it is interesting to know that a marching song for soldiers, entitled 'Follow the Colours', has been composed by Sir Edward Elgar and the words written by Captain de Courcy Stretton. The work was produced at the request of the Worshipful Company of Musicians and is published by Novello and Co.

The air is bold and stirring and worthy to take a far higher place than any of the so-called patriotic airs which our soldiers themselves transform into marching songs when occasion arises. The new song is not intended to fill the place of the recognised regimental marches, nor of the rapid popular song, but to be used throughout the army with semi-official recognition. Under such favourable circumstances it is possible that 'Follow the Colours' will soon be as familiar to the ear as 'Rule Britannia' or 'Red, White and Blue'.

The issue on records of a song which may be expected to play a part in the making of future history is certainly an event of importance, for we need not remind our readers of the force exercised by the talking machine as a speedy means of popularising good music.

'Follow the Colours' will, by-the-way, be found listed among the Rena May records, and it may be observed that Randall Jackson, who was so successful in the Englishman's Home record, also sings 'Follow the Colours, and the artiste's powerful voice lends an added attraction to what is an important acquisition to the list of the nation's songs.

Oct 1909

The International Correspondence School, of Kingsway, are making great progress with their

method of teaching foreign languages by means of the talking machine. This organisation has a large number of students, from all quarters of the globe, including Chinese, Japanese, Hindus, Spaniards, Italians and Frenchmen, to say nothing of the large following of English and Colonial pupils. When a student enrolls, instruction papers, phonograph records and three blank cylinders are sent to him. He places his instruction record on the instrument, and hears a number of words spoken with the accent, inflection and voice of the instructor. By following text-book and phonograph his proper accent is assured. The student of languages has to speak his lessons into the phonograph, and post his cylinder on to London, where an acute-eared instructor detects inaccuracies and criticises the work of the student.

July 1906

An instance of the attention which the Columbia Company bestow upon the improvement of even their lowest priced models is furnished by the new equipment of their "QQ" £2 graphophone. In place of the old reproducer and straight nickel horn, this popular instrument is now furnished with a new-style reproducer and floral horn. The new horn adds considerably to the artistic appearance of the machine, besides improving the reproducing qualities. The reproducer is of the "spider" pattern, with a large mica diaphragm, and is firmly secured into the socket by a thumb screw. Its sensitiveness ensures a sweet and natural tone with rich volume.

June 1905

Another American story: A well-known New York lecturer had his tongue removed because of cancer; he also had twelve months' engagements made in advance, which he was most anxious to keep. Therefore he performed the really remarkable feat of talking into a talking machine for the space of twelve hours every day for a week before the operation for the removal of his tongue took place. The records were sent to the various parts of the country where the lecturer had contracted to appear, so that, although he had been made speechless, the audiences should have the pleasure of listening to his speeches, not only in his own words, but in his own voice.

A Lantern and phonograph service was held in the Sudbrook United Methodist Free Church recently, the views and records, of course, being suited to the occasion.

The talker is a great favourite on shipboard. Six or seven of every ten vessels of the Chesapeake oyster fleet have machines on board.

THE INDESTRUCTIBLE CYLINDER— PAST AND PRESENT.

CONCLUDING WITH THE NEW COLUMBIA TYPE AND
HOW BEST TO REPRODUCE IT.

BY CHRYSOS.

The introduction within the last few months of a new indestructible cylinder record by the Columbia Company, who have appointed the well-known firm of Murdoch and Co. as sole distributors in this country, should revive interest in this type of record. Several attempts have been made in the past to introduce indestructible records, but owing to various defects they have not been able to make much headway. The improvements shown in this latest product should, however, ensure for it a successful future. It will perhaps interest the reader if we trace back the history of the indestructible cylinder.

I believe I am correct in stating that the very first attempt in this direction was the old pink celluloid ones manufactured by the Edison-Bell Company. These, I believe, sold at 2s. 6d. each. They were made of rather thin material, the subject matter being engraved by the old cut-duplicating method. Presumably the celluloid must have been almost in a plastic state for the sapphire to have made any impression on it. Considering they were a first attempt, these were not bad records, but the tone was much too thin and harsh, and the scraping sound was about on a level with that of the old disc needle records. The thinness also of the material made it liable to warp, which it very often did, with the result that whilst playing the reproducer, was bobbing up and down, causing the reproduction of long-sustained notes to sound like an alternation of flats and sharps, and, moreover, to still deteriorate the tone, the record, when on a mandrel, had an annular space all round, between the latter and inside of the record giving a hollowness to the reproduction. The real fault as to tone, however, lay in the reproducers used, for the following reasons. It must be remembered that the wax records at that time were of such a soft substance owing to the necessity of making them by the cut-duplicating method that it was absolutely necessary to use a very light reproducer, otherwise the records would have been quickly worn out. In the light of our latter day knowledge we now know that to reproduce these indestructible records satisfactorily a fairly heavy reproducer should be used, and it is no doubt owing to this fact that the tone of the reproduction is not what it would otherwise have been. The next step forward was by the same Edison-Bell Company, who introduced what they called the "Ebony Records," which were a great improvement on the old pink ones. These, whilst being jet black, were still made of celluloid and of the same internal construction as the others; but the moulded record had then been brought out, and the tone of these black records was much superior to that of their predecessors. They still, however, had the same defect of liability to warp. The tone of them was in many cases equal to the best wax records of that time, but the scraping noise was still far too much in evidence, and tended to make them unpopular. A rival quickly sprang in the field called the International Indestructible Record Company. Their records were an improvement in two respects over previous efforts, viz.: (a) the ends were stiffened by means of steel rings, whilst the interior was lined with a thick coating of plaster of Paris. This thickening of the material considerably improved the tone, doing away with that hollowness which was an objectionable feature with earlier attempts. The plaster of Paris, however, gradually crumbled off, and with constant handling grains of it would get on the record, acting like sharp grit, and tending to scratch the surface. The scraping noise, however, was still conspicuous by its presence. They had a short lease of life, and probably would have been more successful if introduced under the aegis of one of the well-known companies. The great bugbear with all these records had been the unusual amount of scrape inseparable from reproduction.

The next attempt was the Lambert Indestructible Record. This was an improvement over the last-mentioned type in so much as the plaster of Paris lining was superseded by a material made from pulp compressed into an extremely hard state, being subjected to a pressure of many tons. The surface noise also had been somewhat reduced, and considering the improvements these records should have endured a longer run than they did. I think one reason against their success was that they did not make enough

noise. I say "noise" advisedly, for it is unfortunately a fact that owing to the craze for loud records each company tried to go one better than the other in this respect. With the result that in very many cases the records produced could only be termed "noise generators." This is a fact much to be regretted that a quiet musical record (with a large number of users) does not stand a chance against a noisy blustering one. One of the leading firms admitted to me a short time ago that a certain amount of the quality which might be put into a record had to be sacrificed to satisfy the craze for loudness, more's the pity! The present Columbia Indestructible marks the next step in the progress of this kind of record. These differ over the last mentioned ones in the fact that in addition to the compressed pulp lining the ends have a stout steel ring to prevent warping similar to the International Indestructibles.

The great point in their favour is that the scraping-noise has been reduced to a minimum. So much so that, at present, these records are practically equal to, in this respect, the best of their wax prototypes. Some users talk about the beautiful smooth surface of the latter, but do they consider how long it lasts? It is unfortunately only too true, that whilst the material of these wax records is very hard, it is also extremely brittle; with the result that after a few reproductions with the small sapphires at present used, the crests of the fine sound waves are broken off causing the scraping noise to assert itself. In this respect, the old soft duplicated record would last for months, where the present ones sometimes last only for weeks. Those who value their wax records sufficiently to want to make them wear as long as possible would be well advised to fit their reproducer with the ordinary ball sapphire as used in the old type Edison repros. The records will not reproduce quite so loudly, but they will certainly wear much longer. It is important, of course, that the sapphire should not be too large or too small, as, in the former case the reproduction will be most unsatisfactory, and in the latter, the records will be quickly cut up. With regard to the indestructible cylinders, it is admitted that to get the best results from a record, the sapphire should be able to get to the bottom of each sound wave and not skim the surface. When we consider the number of vibrations which occur with certain sounds, and the circumferential velocity at which they pass under the sapphire reproducing point it is very evident that if this sapphire is not to skim the crest of some of the sound-waves, a fairly heavy weight must be used. Now, of course, the weight which a wax record will bear without undergoing undue wear is considerably limited, as also is the smallness of the sapphire which can be used. It is here that the indestructible record holds the advantage. Sufficient weight can be used to ensure the sapphire getting well down into all the sound waves, and it can be made as small as desirable to get the best results. The Columbia Company in introducing these new indestructibles, which I must mention have been on the American market for two or three years past, although only recently acquired by them from the Indestructible Record Company of America, made a wise move in introducing at the same time a special reproducer to be used in conjunction with them, they having proved from past experience that a reproducer that gives excellent results with the moulded wax record is not necessarily the best for indestructibles. The principle of course is to put plenty of pressure on the record and at the same time to use a sapphire as near the shape of the sound waves or hollows as possible. For obtaining the pressure a small coiled spring is used, similar to the spring in the Lyric type of reproducers, and the sapphire is altogether different to anything previously employed for the purpose. It is no doubt a fact that if we could reproduce records by means of the same sapphire which is employed to make them, that we should get the best results, but unfortunately it is impossible to do this, as the keen cutting edge of the sapphire would quickly cut up any record, whether wax or otherwise. These new reproducers, however, have sapphires practically the same shape and size as the ordinary recording tool, with the exception that the cutting edge is slightly rounded off just sufficiently to avoid causing wear to the record in any way. The natural result is that the tone is loud without any suspicion of blast, and much more solidity is imparted to the reproduction. If you want a sample of a loud cylinder record, try Alan Turner's "For all Eternity," on a Columbia Lyric type, or Edison machine, with one of these special reproducers. Messrs. Murdoch who have secured the sole rights of these new indestructibles for the United Kingdom, have wisely, I think, decided that if the records are to have a fair chance, it is necessary that they should be played by means of a reproducer which does them justice,

McCormack, First Tenor of the Day, exclusive to ODEON.

THE SOUND WAVE AND TALKING MACHINE RECORD.

and to this end they have made the remarkable offer of supplying one of these reproducers, to fit either an Edison or Columbia machine, at the absurd price of 2s, to anyone purchasing at least 1 doz. records. It is certainly a most expensive advertising scheme, and it only shows the great confidence they must have in the future of these new records. Of course the idea is to see that the records have a proper start by being reproduced at their best. There is no doubt that some of the former indestructibles would have found more favour if more attention had been given to the all-important point (no pun intended) of reproduction.

Talking machine users can, broadly speaking, be divided into three camps:—

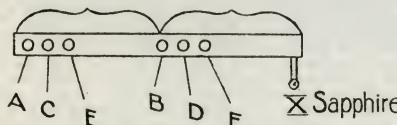
1. We have those who are devotees of the disc, and have nothing good to say of the cylinder.
2. We have those who swear by the cylinder record and will have nothing to do with the disc.

3. We have those impartial users (and they are a large number) who see good points in all types of records. I believe I am speaking correctly in saying that as a rule they claim that the disc is better for vocalists, whilst bands reproduce more naturally and clearly on the cylinder. I express no opinion either way, but merely state what I believe to be a fact. The cylinder devotees may be sub divided again into two classes, viz., those who will have volume at any price. They say give us volume, we don't care how we get it as long as we get it. The other class are just the opposite; they say give us quality of tone; volume is a secondary condition with us.

To the first class I say, when playing these indestructibles, get one of the new reproducers and use it just as it is. If, however, you belong to the second class, and prefer a quieted tone, use the same tension reproducer, but instead of the sapphire already fitted substitute a small ball-shaped one, the smaller the better. One of the Pathé sound box type or the new Edison H reproducer model. Also mount it in the lever, so that the distance between F and X fig. is slightly increased. In fact, the simplest way

arm, the taper variety for preference, and one with as long an arm as possible. Secure the supporter bracket to the cabinet in such a position that when fitted with a Pathé type sound-box the sapphire rests just a little bit beyond the top of the record, but not too much beyond, otherwise the sound-box will skid towards the centre when placed on either the beginning or extreme end of the record. If a Pathé sound box is used, it will be necessary to fit a smaller diaphragm, however, as the ordinary one would be too large and produce a decidedly tubby tone. A fairly thick glass diaphragm, 1/2 in. diameter will give the best result. This can easily be fixed as follows: Remove the ordinary diaphragm, then place a 1/2 in. pure best quality rubber gasket (not too thin) in the exact centre of the diaphragm chamber, having previously put a little adhesive on the underside to make it stick. Then put a very thin film of adhesive on the upper side and on this put the glass diaphragm. On the top of this place another rubber ring, same size, but without any adhesive, and on top of all put a moderately heavy weight. Put in a warm place until the adhesive has thoroughly set; then remove the weight and top rubber gasket. All that then remains is to secure the sapphire-arm to the centre of the diaphragm by means of a small quantity of adhesive. The less wax the better. By use of this sound-box in conjunction with the tone arm these indestructible cylinders will reproduce with the deep full tone characteristic of the sapphire and needle discs. Tone arms of various types and sizes can be procured from Messrs. Murdoch or their numerous agents. A great reduction of surface noise is effected by reproducing in this way. A far cheaper and even more satisfactory arrangement, although not quite so compact, is to get a fairly long, say 24 in. straight taper phonograph horn, fitted with a leg about the centre of its gravity, like the horns on the small Puck phonos, and then mount the sound-box direct on to the end of the horn by means of a stiff rubber or vulcanite piece of tube. The leg of the horn can be made to fit in the socket of one of the cheap horn stands, with the bent horn support removed, care being taken to make the leg on the horn fit well, without any shake, but at the same time allowing full movement. By using a horn in this way, the comparatively small arc described by the sound-box end of the horn, will be nearly a straight line, and for this reason this method is much to be preferred to the tone arm way. It is of the utmost importance when reproducing with a Pathé type sound-box to see that the sapphire rests just a little beyond the centre, actually, of the record, otherwise the tone will be considerably muffled, this is more especially the case if an ordinary needle sound-box is used, but fitted with a sapphire, as in this case, owing to the needle arm being quite straight, and not curved like the Pathé, when mounted on the centre of the record there is no pressure exerted on the diaphragm, with the result stated above. These indestructible records should particularly commend themselves to those in the habit of giving public entertainment in small halls, such as at bazaars, school meetings, etc., as damp and dust does not affect them in the least, and by using the special reproducers and a large horn, a sufficiently loud reproduction can be obtained. To those who run penny-in-slot phonographs, they should be a boon, as ordinary wax records quickly wear out owing to the exceptional amount of dust and damp to which these automatic machines are subjected. The automatic penny-in-slot phonograph is a thing which has been somewhat overlooked by speculators in this class of investment, but given a proper type of machine, and worked under proper conditions, I am of opinion that a good thing could be made of it. I might enlarge on the subject, but as it is outside the scope of the present article no more need be said about it here. Perhaps at some future date, with the Editor's permission I may be able to give a few particulars of a ballon-d'essai which I made in this direction a few years ago.

In conclusion, I might mention a fact which has not yet been made public, viz., that very shortly these Indestructibles are going to be also manufactured in the 4-minute type, with special machines to take them. There is no doubt in this form they will become immediately popular. To those whose means are limited the Indestructible record should particularly appeal, for the simple reason that they can be used as often as desired until tired of, and they can then be disposed of at a good price, being of course quite equal to new for reproducing purposes, or they can be exchanged over and over again without deteriorating in the least either as to appearance or reproducing qualities. If you have not yet tried them do not be prevented by prejudice or past experience from doing so.



would be to make a new sapphire arm as shown, the sapphire being mounted in a vertical position. By having a series of holes drilled as illustrated the proportional length of the two arms of the lever could be altered by putting the link and hinge pin through holes A and B, C and D, or E and F respectively, the three positions being tried in turn until the position to attain the most satisfactory result is discovered. The nearer the two arms of the lever are to each other in length the quieter will be the tone. By doing this we shall get a great decrease of surface noise, the smaller reproducing point helping in this respect. I might mention with regard to indestructible records, speaking from the past experience both of myself and others, the more they are used the quieter does the surface noise become. I have been given to understand that when first made infinitesimally small particles of the material, which can be seen under a powerful microscope, adhere to the surface of the record, which, with constant reproduction, gradually disappear, and that the surface noise is due to these smaller particles. As I have said before, however, these now Columbia Indestructibles show a very great improvement over all previous indestructibles in this respect. As I was stating just now, a large number of talkerites prefer what is generally termed the gramophone tone. There is no way of actually describing it on paper, but it is only necessary to hear a disc machine and then a phonograph and the difference between the two is immediately apparent.

Now these indestructibles can be made to reproduce with the needle disc tone in the following way. It would, perhaps, be more accurate to call it the sapphire disc tone.

This reproduction can be obtained by playing the record with a Pathé type of sound-box. Procure an ordinary disc-machine tone

YAP-I-ADDI-I-AY Sung by GEO. GROSSMITH JUN^o on JUMBO RECORDS.

TWO-HUNDRED THREAD AND AFTER!

A CHAT WITH MR. HENRY SEYMOUR.

There can be no doubt that the advent of the Edison Amberol record has marked an epoch in the talking machine industry, specially in its relation to the cylinder branch. The recent demonstration by the National Phonograph Company to a very representative selection of pressmen has even stirred the fibres of the lay journals, to whom, but a few years ago, the talking machine was apparently only an object of derision, and has resulted in very favourable notices of the new development in the most conservative organs of the press.

To get a few hints on the possibility of the "new-old" cut development, a representative of the *Sound Wave* recently had a chat with Mr. Henry Seymour at his place, the Microphonograph Company, 291, Goswell Road, E.C. Mr. Seymour is recognised as a scientific authority on this subject, and his views and impressions will be read with interest we believe. It will be remembered that in our last issue we

also to the disc, for the application of the 200 thread to the phono discs is a revelation of pure tone with very little reduction in volume."

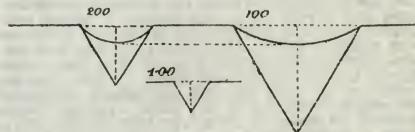
Asked as to the possible effect of the new cut on the needle disc, Mr. Seymour stated that they could not do anything with this type of disc, and for that reason he was inclined to think that the needle disc would suffer. The tonal strength of this latter type depends on the amplitude of the vibrations laterally and superficially in contradistinction to that of the phono disc, which is cut into the depth of the material. Consequently, the present pitch of thread in the needle disc is about as fine as it is possible to adopt, unless the record is to enormously suffer."

"I am told," said our representative, "that the 200 thread record is a resuscitated idea. Is that so?"

"In a way, yes," said Mr. Seymour, "but not as generally stated. The old 200 thread records were done at a slow speed, and were either 'masters' or mechanical duplicates, involving soft wax. They easily broke down when being reproduced. The advance in the art of recording, together with the modern moulding processes, have changed the conditions tremendously; and whereas the original master record may to-day be made on a soft blank, it may be duplicated in wax as hard as you please by casting from the matrix. Therefore, the volume of the 100 thread records can be reached in the finer cut, as the greater density of the material in the moulded product ensure a more robust tone, as well as an improvement in the quality thereof."

From this the conversation progressed easily to the subject matter of his own new invention, for which he claimed that no tone whatever is lost, and Mr. Seymour went on to demonstrate how, in his opinion, Mr. Edison had not considered the question of the diminished width of track, when he stated that the volume must be the same as on the 100 thread, as it depends on the amplitude of vibrations, or, in other words, on the depth of the cut.

"That the volume or intensity of sound is correlated to the amplitude of the vibration is a theoretical axiom, which I certainly am too cautious to question," continued Mr. Seymour; "but what I do say, and what Mr. Edison has overlooked, is the obvious fact that in the reproduction of sound by mechanical agents, such as are employed in connection with phonographic records, the area of frictional contact by the reproducing stylus with the available track or record surface is also a factor in the case. By the reduction of this contact by one-half half the volume goes. But Mr. Edison claims something more than the mere reduction of track width. He claims that by cutting relatively twice as deep, although only half as wide, he preserves the volume of the wider track. This can never be done by the U track, and the V track, which is my method, is the only way in which it can be accomplished, because every successive increment of depth in the track is not accompanied by so great a cleavage in the width, as when the circular stylus is employed." Mr. Seymour then sketched a few diagrammatic illustrations to make his explanation manifestly clear, which we reproduce.



MR. HENRY SEYMOUR.

announced that Mr. Seymour had invented a new system of recording, by which he claimed that an eight minute record could be put on the market to equal the volume and tone of the new "Amberol."

Mr. Seymour was found in his experimental room, an apartment replete with many fearful and wondrous contrivances used in this preliminary branch of the business. There were recording machines on the most modern and improved principles, recording horns, and a number of delicately made instruments of high technical value, as to the use and reason for which the amateurs could only, at the best, guess. On the subject of the new record, Mr. Seymour stated that in his opinion Mr. Edison had started a revolution which it would be impossible to arrest. "The fine cut is undoubtedly the cut of the future," he said, "and would give a new impetus, not only to the cylinder trade, but

"The problem is wholly a question of track," said Mr. Seymour. "The arc of the circle affords no solution. I have found a trigonometrical solution. It is the employment of a recording stylus, the cutting portion of which constitutes two sides of an equilateral triangle. I have included two sides of a square in my specification, by way of modification, but the equilateral triangle is much to be preferred."

"Have you considered," was suggested, "the amount of wear which a V reproducing stylus would necessarily subject the record to?"

"Oh, yes," was the reply; "the wear will be no greater than with the ball, as the pressure is distributed over the sides absolutely. The pressure of the point will be that of the theoretical minimum, which is nothing at all. Apart from that, I have confined the application of the method

to indestructible cylinders, believing that the days of wax records are numbered. I have experimented a great deal to obtain a contractile material, capable of being molten, and yet be as hard as the celluloid or shellac compositions for cylinders; but I am convinced that it cannot be found, at least, one which would be commercially practicable. The future cylinder with a fine cut will, in my opinion, be the indestructible. Everything, with the new conditions, is in its favour."

On the subject of tracking, Mr. Seymour contended that the V track will favour a more perfect tracking of the reproducer.

"A 400 thread record is quite practicable with the V cut," he went on, "although impossible with the U cut; but there is no need to go beyond the 200 thread limit. The amount of recorded matter on an 'Amberol' record is greater than the ordinary person is apt to imagine."

"What would be the entire length of track on such a record, if it were unrolled, as it were, and set out as a straight line?" was asked.

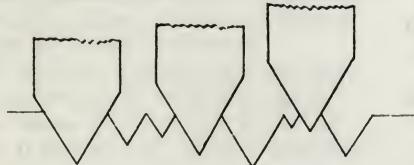
"Nothing easier," replied Mr. Seymour, and taking an "Amberol" record, a rule, a pair of callipers, a pencil and a scrap of paper, he stated an about a minute that its track was exactly 131 yards and 9 inches in length! This, to his mind, at once disposed of the idea of recording on a ribbon or endless band, as has been proposed.

"The trouble with present type records is that no lapidary is yet born who is able to make two circular recording stylus exactly alike in diameter. At any rate, the cost of doing this would be enormous and quite out of the question. How, then," asked Mr. Seymour, "is it possible to procure a perfect engagement of a spherical reproducing stylus of any given size with the record track under these circumstances? This does not at first strike one as being of so much importance, yet when one stops to consider, it is the essence of a proper reproduction that the ball should engage every portion of the track. One of two things happens in everyday usage—either the ball is too large or too small. In the former case, the stylus rides only on the ragged top edges which define the width of the track; in the latter case it rides on the bottom of the track only and with a minimum of frictional contact." (See illustration.)



These microscopic details which we are all apt to overlook are evidently of the greatest importance, and a natural question was how he proposed by his method to get over similar difficulties.

"They don't arise," said he. "The method I employ is as simple as it is scientific. The angles of an equilateral triangle are always mathematically equal. Therefore, no matter what the size either the recording or reproducing stylus may be, it will always engage perfectly, and the latter will clear the upper ragged walls of the record, and thus avoid the jarring sounds incidental to the old record from such cause." (See illustration.)



Asked whether he intended using the same triangular stylus for recording and reproducing, he replied "Not necessarily, although this could easily be done by means of a cylindrical shank, the contact portion of which in recording might be shaped as a triangle from the semi-circle, being ground also for clearance. Then it would only be necessary

to reverse the position of the stylus for reproducing, so that the cutting edges would not be presented to the record as it revolved. However sharp these edges might be, they could never by any chance cut into the material of the record so disposed. It might be better to employ a separate reproducing stylus, however," Mr. Seymour went on, "in which the final point could be slightly rounded to avoid possibility of scratching the record by improper adjustment. I claim also that surface noises are materially reduced by my method, this being due to the much reduced weight which such a stylus renders necessary in the recording tool. Only the vibrations themselves determine the maximum depth of the cut, the track proper being exceedingly shallow. The record noise, therefore, will vary with the strength of the recorded tones. In the heavy passages there will be more surface noise than during the lighter passages, but this is automatically corrected, as the strong tones will render the track inaudible. In a word, the degree of surface noise will be commensurate with the volume of the record, which is as it should be."

"Is it theoretically possible to eliminate surface noises altogether?" was the next question.

"Oh, dear no," answered Mr. Seymour, "that is, not with the cutting method. The frictional contact is the source of sound in a record, whereas the undulations merely determine the pitch of such sounds, and incidentally affect the volume by the greater thrust which depth exerts upon the diaphragm of the reproducer, but not as depth per se. The great feature about my triangular track is that surface noises which cannot be entirely eliminated are made to correspond with the tones of the record. In the delicate passages no appreciable track noise will be heard at all, whereas, in the fortissimo range, it will be obscured; in other words, there will be as much light and shade in the track as in the record itself."

How far our expert readers will agree with Mr. Seymour's contention it is not for us to say, but it is quite certain they will be given the most careful attention and consideration, emanating, as they do, from one who has so high a reputation amongst the leading investigators in the science of sound registration and reproduction.

SUBMITTED BY FRANK ANDREWS

JAN. 1909

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**ROBINSON'S, The Talkeries, 213, Deansgate,
MANCHESTER, ENGLAND.**

“Down by the Old Bull and Bush”

JUNE 1905

Everybody has heard it. Every orchestra in every theatre in the Kingdom has played the tune, innumerable artistes have sung the song. Finally, every phonograph company has records of it. Miss Florrie Forde, it will be remembered first made the “Bull and Bush” popular as a record, for the Edison Bell Company. Since then the selection, by Miss Forde and other artistes, has been one of the most popular on the lists - taking rank with Hiawatha and far outdistancing Bedelia. I should say myself that the sales of the Bull and Bush exceeded those of any one of these; certainly the song itself has been more popular in the Halls and in the street.

Though everybody knows the tune, few, it is safe to say - out of London at all events - know the Old Bull and Bush Inn itself. Yet it is a popular hostelry and favourably known to Bank Holiday revellers at the Heath. It is charmingly situated at Hampstead, or rather at Golder's Hill, with some pleasant gardens in the rear where visitors may indulge in the *dolce far niente*.

Formerly, there was a band, but now a phonograph has taken its place. It is said that holiday seekers prefer the phonograph to the band. There is less monotony, for the Bull and Bush proprietary have a fine collection of every variety of records.

The song, by-the-way, has done the proprietor of the hotel no little good, and the effect has, of course, been heightened by the numerous records of it made. Given, say, 20 hearers to each record, and a total output of 100,000 records (both probably far below the mark), and we have 2,000,000 people whose attention has been drawn to the existence of the Old Bull and Bush. Add to this the benefit which would accrue from the free advertisements in the music-halls, and one gains an idea of the extent to which the inn is indebted to the man who composed the song. The phonograph “receives” in the gardens on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

A representative of the “T.M.N.”, by the exercise of a little imagination, was able to conjure up the scene on Sunday or Bank Holiday. First, the phonograph, presiding genius of the occasion, rendering records - the Bull and Bush, of course, “all the favourites of the halls”, and, possibly, with a fine impartiality, Alexander in his Glory Song. Then the audience, drawn from all parts of London, from the most respectable classes, but with perhaps occasionally an ‘Arry and ‘Arriet thrown in.

Columbia Records 25,000 series, and Homophone Records - a further appeal. By F. Andrews

In the April issue of 'Hillandale News' I made an appeal for certain information with reference to Homophone Records. I should have mentioned that this series of discs was also issued with the label style "Homophone Company m.b.H.", the reason for which I shall not dwell upon at this juncture.

A short list of 'Blank Entry' numbers was given which already needs amending through my own researches. The catalogue numbers, common to both sides, for which I require details in full, now stand at Nos. 287, 288, 289 445, 448, 449, 450, 475, 494, 515, 526/7, 529/30, 537/8, 542, 545/6, 551/2/3, 556/7, 569/70, 603, 609/10, 614, 628, 645, 647, 653, 659, 668/9, 672/3/4, 677, 679, 680/4, 684/5/6, 689, 691, 695, 703, 730, 839 841, 843, 892, 915, 988 to 999, 1026 to 1085 1089, 1090/1, 1093/4, 1097 to 1165, 1167 to 1240 and 1242, and beyond.

You will see that the highest number known is now 1241, which has extended the range by another 245 discs from the highest known number in the previous appeal. This extension has been made known to me by a correspondent in Cambridgeshire. Homophone Record No. 1241 had been pressed from stampers bearing dates July 15, 1913 and Aug. 8 1913, so it is therefore probable that the catalogue numbers carried on for another year of monthly issues until the outbreak of war stopped all imports of German manufactured discs. Even then the label may have been continued by the British agents (who were German) by subcontracting Carl Lindstrom (London) Ltd., which is what they did with the sister label "Homochord", for a short while.

I mentioned Record No. 283 which contains the Polonaise and Styrienne from Thomas' "Mienon" sung by a German soprano,

probably in German. I now have the face numbers of this disc (which may be the matrix numbers also) and these are 1468 and 1475, and there is a strong likelihood that the singer was Marie Dietrich, of the Royal Opera Berlin. The disc, like many others sold in Britain, was issued without the artiste's name, the reasons for which anonymity I do not know. I appeal to European members to keep a look-out for the German issue of the record, which would bear only the face numbers, as this should give the artiste's name. Australian members might care to look out for Homophone information under the Rondophone, Rexophone, Colonial and Universal Record labels.

Other German operatic aria recordings, issued in Britain, with no artist credits were:-
Tenor:- 1054, Vesti la Guibba, Pagliacci, 1100 Siciliona "Cav. Rust.>"; 1060 Flower Song "Carmen"; 1056 Serenade?"Il Trovatore"
Soprano:- 1471 Aria "La Traviata", 1472 Gilda's Aria "Rigoletto"; 1466 Aria "Der Freischutz", 1467 Aria "Die Fledermaus", Tenor and Soprano:- 1540 Duet "Carmen"; 1542 Duet "La Traviata". Tenor:- 1055 and 1061 Arias from "Rigoletto", 1083 Love Song "Die Walkure"; 1099 Prieslied "Der Meistersingers"; 1102 Song "Asra"; 1112 Fruhlingslied. Soprano:- 1469 and 1467 "Postillion d'Amour" - Aria in 2 parts; 1473 La Villanelle (Dell Acqua); 1477 Aria "La Traviata", 1065 Gralserzahlung "Logengrin", with 1066, 2 parts; 1057 Mein Lieber Schwan and 1053 Lohengrin's Abschied from "Lohengrin"; 1058 Stretta "Der Troubadour" 1059 Ich Vunscht ach dass in Fieber "Bajazzo". Soprano:- 1478 and 1479 Un Voce Poco Fa, and Io Sono Dolce "Barber of Seville"; 1476 The Nightingale (Albieff) 1474 Aria "Lakme"; 1464 Neve

Freuden, Neve Schmerzen "Die Hochzeit der Figaro", 1465 Trube Augen, Liebchen, Taucen, Act 3 "Der Freischutz". Tenor:- 1027 Aria "La Juive"; 1068 Aria "Faust"; Baritone:- 1131 Valentine's Prayer "Faust"; 1717 O Star of Eve - "Tannhauser". Soprano:- 1426 Addio del Passato "La Traviata", 1424 La Voleta (Marchesi), 1432, 1433 Leonora's Aria "Il Trovatore".

All the above numbers are the single face numbers, and although coupled for British double sided issues, may have been coupled differently as German issues. Also, as they were all on sale before the year 1908 they were probably sold in Britain without their catalogue numbers printed on the labels - only the face numbers. German issues seem never to have had catalogue numbers common to both sides.

I see I have four more "Anonymous" sides: Tenor & Baritone:- 1547 Duo from "Martha"; Soprano & Baritone:- 1545 Papageno's Duo "Die Zauberflöte"; Soprano, Tenor & Bass:- 1006 Trio "Faust"; Tenor & Baritone:- 1544 Duo "Faust".

The operatic vocal records were not the only German recorded discs which omitted the artiste's names, instrumentalists and whistlers were also sold under the cloak of anonymity as were the bands, although these were sometimes given pseudonyms, such as the Imperial Regimental Band, The Homophone Military Band and The Homophone Orchestra, when, in fact, musicians from various German Infantry and Guards Regiments had undertaken the recordings, and were issued in Germany under their correct style.

There are some London recordings for which I have no artist's credits.
Cat.No.304-6535 Shining Star - Vocal
Cat.No.304-6573 The Singer was Irish - Vocal. Cat.No.317-6552 My Dreams - 6579 - Glorious Devon.

For some inexplicable reason, I seem to have "created" an opera singer in the list published in April - I cannot trace a Rene Dubois - he would seem to be a split personality, part Rene Fournets and part

Gaston Dubois!

Any information with reference to the foregoing opera singers and the 'Blank Entry' numbers will be gratefully received.

SOVEREIGN RECORDS IN 1907

It is almost certain that only 132 of these 10 inches diameter double-sided discs were issued during 1907, and of these I have listed the first 100 discs, then I have a gap formed by numbers 101 to 126 and then I have the last few discs noted, which were numbers 127 to 132. These last were described as part of List No.3 but the Company was already in the hands of the Receiver, and further issues were unlikely. List No.1, comprised discs Nos. 1 to 86 and List No.2 comprised discs Nos. 87 to 126 but only Nos.87 to 100 were listed in the trade journals. Lists Numbers 1 and 2 comprised 252 sides pressed from Nicole Record Matrices. List No.3 was of new recordings.

If any collector has any Sovereign Records numbered 101 to 126, I would appreciate having full details - In the nature of things those are an extremely rare record, having been on sale for a few months only - but as Peter Dawson's Nicole Recordings appeared on Sovereign Records and as there are a number of researchers interested in producing a Dawson discography and cylinderography, details of any Dawson sides on Sovereign discs numbered between 101 and 126 will be welcome to such researchers as well as myself.

All details to me please at [REDACTED]
Neasden, N.W.10.

COLUMBIA RECORDS 25,000 and 26,000 SERIES.

I have a 'Blank Entries' list for the above series of Columbia Records which were the first disc recordings to be made in London by the American company known as The Columbia Phonograph Company, General, founded in 1894, but who were unable to do business in Britain, because of patent restrictions until the spring of 1900, at which time Columbia had no disc record business, except for the wax discs for the child's hand-

operated disc graphophone.

The first Columbia discs, including the earlier Climax Records, were American imports, and were single-sided 10 inches and 7 inches diameter records. These were in a series from No.1 upwards - with a large gap for Far Eastern recordings. The recording of British artists in London began in 1903 - the waxes were sent to Bridgeport, Connecticut, U.S.A. and the finished discs, with Black and Silver "Columbia" labels were delivered to dealers in Britain. These were given a catalogue/Matrix series beginning at number 25,000 - "I've made up my mind to sail away", by W.H. Berry; and it would appear that every record up to number 25081 had been recorded by W.H. Berry who had been building up a large repertoire on the Columbia XP cylinders before the wax disc masters were cut in 1903. Pressed discs were on sale by December 1903. Records 25082 to 6 may have been by Berry.

My Blank Entries for the first hundred discs which could be either 7 inches or 10 inches diameter are:- 25005, 25008, 25012, 25017/8 25020, 25022, 25027/8, 25030, 25032/3/4/5, 25037, 25039, 25041, 25043, 25045/6, 25049 25050, 25053/4/5, 25058, 25060, 25062/3, 25066/7/8/9, 25070/1, 25073 to 25078, 25082 to 25086 and 25098 which last should be by Edgar Coyle - Baritone. Later, discs were made in England and if retained, some of the above may have appeared on the dark green and gold labelled "Columbia Gramophone Record", the "Columbia Single-Face Record", "Columbia Record" or even on "Regal".

Please send any information to me at the address already given above.

North London Phonograph and Gramophone Society

Last month some of our members had the pleasure of hearing records made by the process previously referred to in your columns as the "New Cut". We already knew something of the system, owing to the occasional presence of its originator, Mr. P.J. Packman, of the National Gramophone Company, at our meetings. The matter coming up for discussion, Mr. Packman was kind enough to invite us to his residence to see and hear the record. He showed us the metal galvanos and the pressed copies, which were in turn duly examined with a magnifying glass. Picking up a sample, Mr. Packman requested us to time a machine to 80 revs. and then observe the playing length. This proved to be no less than six and a quarter minutes. He then referred to the prevalent view that attempts to diminish the width of track on discs involved loss of volume and declared that this was quite erroneous. Compared with ordinary disc records of either system, some of the latter showed very little scratch and reproduced with considerable volume on the Pathé box used, while the needle stood up to the end very well, which latter quality we made a point of testing. The records demonstrated were not for public issue, but, nevertheless, several of them were of sufficient quality to indicate the possibilities of the new system. We asked whether superiority over the sapphire played disc was claimed and received an answer in the affirmative. For, said Mr. Packman, unless the Edison system of a shallow cut and a feed screw be adopted,

it was necessary to cut deep, which resulted in noise. In the new system such a depth was cut that no great care was required to prevent the cutter leaving the surfaces in places, at the same time preserving sufficient clearance to prevent readily spoiling the neighbouring track. Mr. Packman wished it to be quite understood that a special feature of his invention was the use of a needle that was purposely intended not to fit the track, but sustained the weight of the sound box on the region near the bottom. After a pleasant and instructive evening we reluctantly took leave of our host, carrying with us a most favourable impression, brought about by reason of the breadth and unprejudiced nature of his views. Asked at parting whether he thought his system would supersede those in common use, he replied that he thought there was room for everybody. At the last meeting I signified my intention of providing a gramophone concert in a small way for the members at the next meeting (March). The character of the selections may be gathered from the fact that records Kirkby Lunn, Evan Williams, John Harrison, etc., together with picked orchestral discs and Scharwenka pianos, will form the bulk of the performance. No effort will be spared to make the affair sufficiently good to appeal to people of all views. Intending members should remember that the monthly meetings are held at 74, Drayton Park, Highbury, every second Saturday in the month.

Adrian F. Sykes (Secretary)

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